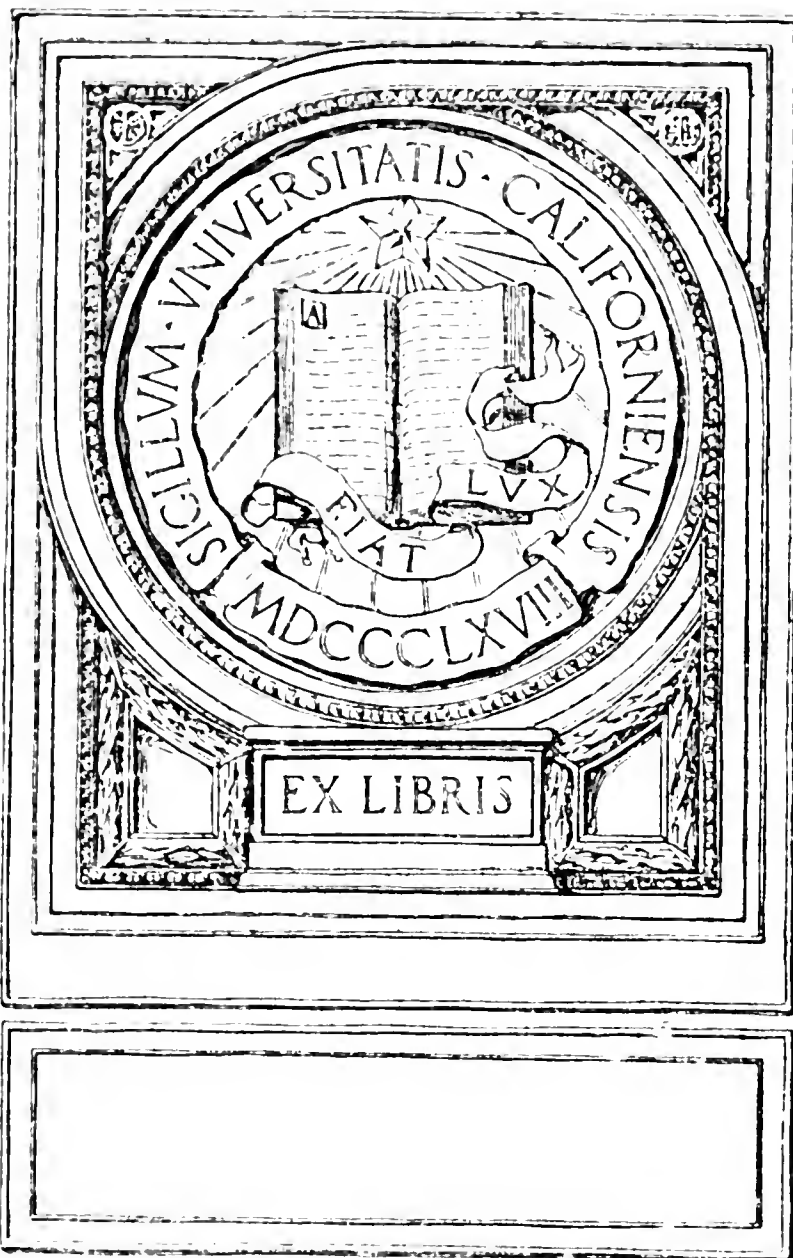


LIFE OF  
EDNA LYALL



EX LIBRIS









WORKS BY EDNA LYALL.

**Doreen.** The Story of a Singer. Crown 8vo, 6s.

**Wayfaring Men:** a Story of Theatrical Life.  
Crown 8vo, 6s.

**Hope the Hermit:** a Romance of Borrowdale.  
Crown 8vo, 6s.

**The Autobiography of a Slander.** Fcp. 8vo,  
sewed, 1s.

*Presentation Edition.* With 20 Illustrations by  
LANCELOT SPEED. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. net.

**The Autobiography of a Truth.** Fcp. 8vo,  
sewed, 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

**The Hinderers:** a Story of the Present Time.  
Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d.

**The Burges Letters:** a Record of Child-Life in  
the Sixties. With Coloured Frontispiece and  
8 other Full-page Illustrations. Crown 8vo,  
gilt edges, 2s. 6d.

---

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.,  
LONDON, NEW YORK AND BOMBAY.

# THE LIFE OF EDNA LYALL

(ADA ELLEN BAYLY)



THE  
OF  
CALIFORNIA



TO MR  
ALFRED



*W. P. Anderson, Studio, Boston*

*Winter 1885-86*

*Edna Lyall.*

THE LIFE OF  
EDNA LYALL

(ADA ELLEN BAYLY)

BY  
J. M. ESCREET

*WITH TWO PORTRAITS*

SECOND IMPRESSION

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

NEW YORK AND BOMBAY

1904



The dear Lord's best interpreters  
Are humble human souls ;  
The gospel of a life like hers  
Is more than books or scrolls.

From scheme and creed the light goes out,  
The saintly fact survives ;  
The blessed Master none can doubt  
Revealed in holy lives.

—WHITTIER.





# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS—1857-1864.

	PAGE
Birth and Parentage—Ancestors—Family life—First words— First recollection—Nurse—Childish terrors—Play—Heroes —Shermanbury—Brighton—Farnham—Bishop Sumner . . . . .	2

## CHAPTER II.

SCHOOLDAYS—1865-1875.

School—Caterham—Books—Dancing—Charades—Father's and Mother's death—Boarding school—Schoolfellows—Note- books—Moody and Sankey—Lincoln . . . . .	14
---	----

## CHAPTER III.

GIRLHOOD—1876-1879.

Writing—Visits—Wales—Edith Wynne—Finances—Minster Yard—Parish work—Gaieties— <i>Won by Waiting</i> — <i>Nom de plume</i> —Biarritz— <i>Donovan</i> — <i>Their Happiest Christmas</i> — Mr. Bradlaugh—London . . . . .	26
---	----

## CHAPTER IV.

FAILURE AND SUCCESS—1880-1883.

Imagination—Problems—The "No"—Light—Rev. J. Vaughan —Rev. P. Newnham—Rev. C. E. Steward—Italy—Innsbruck —Reviews on <i>Donovan</i> —Letter from Mr. Gladstone— <i>We Two</i> success—Typewriter . . . . .	36
---	----

## CHAPTER V.

EASTBOURNE—1884-1886.

PAGE

Home life—Sunday class—St. Saviour's—Canon Whelpton— <i>In the Golden Days</i> —Humour—Slander—Archdeacon Wilson— <i>Faust</i> — <i>The Autobiography of a Slander</i> —Norway —Mrs. Mary Davies— <i>The Knight Errant</i> . . . . .	52
---	----

## CHAPTER VI.

IDEALS—1887, 1888.

"Carlo" and Idealism—Self-sacrifice—Nephews and nieces— Yachting— <i>Derrick Vaughan</i> —Dr. Walsham How—Norway again—Provst Kielland—Death of Rev. P. Newnham . . . . .	72
---	----

## CHAPTER VII.

ILLNESS—1889-1891.

<i>A Hardy Norseman</i> —Illness—Personal appearance—Christmas —Death of Mr. Bradlaugh—Letters to Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner—Italian Lakes— <i>Max Hereford's Dream</i> —Hampden House— <i>To Right the Wrong</i> —Ilkley—Bangor—Bishop of Wakefield . . . . .	88
---	----

## CHAPTER VIII.

POLITICS—1892, 1893.

Influenza—Politics—Mrs. Besant—Women's Liberal Federation —Election—Mrs. L. B. Walford—Miss Agnes Giberne— The Lakes— <i>Doreen</i> —Young Authors—Autograph collectors —Ireland—The Ladies' Gallery—Carriage accident—Change of publishers—Miss Rowland-Grey . . . . .	108
---	-----

# CONTENTS

ix

## CHAPTER IX.

BUSY YEARS—1894-1897.

PAGE

Switzerland—Lady Verney—Scotland—Ireland—Letter from Mr. Gladstone—Mr. Michael Davitt—Mr. W. O'Brien— Mr. Ben Greet—Mr. A. S. Homewood— <i>How the Children Raised the Wind</i> —Armenia— <i>The Sign of the Cross</i> — Stratford-on-Avon— <i>The Autobiography of a Truth</i> —The Archbishop of York—Canon Rawnsley— <i>Wayfaring Men</i> — Women Writers' Dinner—The Burges monument— <i>The Critic</i> . . . . .	136
--	-----

## CHAPTER X.

WAR—1898-1900.

Reading Societies— <i>Hope the Hermit</i> —Italy—Illness—Mr. J. J. Green—Dolgelly—Mr. Walford—Mr. C. E. Maurice— Duelling and war—The Peace Crusade—Friendship—Mr. Ruskin—The War—The play <i>In Spite of All</i> —Mr. Home- wood's account of it . . . . .	166
---	-----

## CHAPTER XI.

DISAPPOINTMENT AND SORROW—1900, 1901.

“When ae door steeks”—Letter to Miss Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler—Caterham—The New Forest—Keswick— <i>In Spite of All</i> —Plymouth—Bosbury—Lady Henry Somerset—G. F. Watts—The Wye—A Friends' meeting—Wales—Suffolk— Sorrow— <i>The Burges Letters</i> . . . . .	196
---	-----

CHAPTER XII.

PEACE—1902, 1903.

	PAGE
Inspiration—The pantomime—Letter to a godson— <i>The Hinderers</i> —Cambridge—Proclamation of Peace—Free Trade— <i>Sydney Wharnecliffe</i> —The Lakes again—Belgium—More sorrow—The Boer Generals—Ideal Christmas—Last illness . . . . .	230

APPRECIATIONS—

The Bishop of Hereford . . . . .	257
The Bishop of Ripon . . . . .	259
The Archdeacon of Westminster . . . . .	260
Canon Rawnsley . . . . .	261
Mr. Justin M'Carthy . . . . .	263
Mr. William O'Brien . . . . .	264
 EPILOGUE . . . . .	 265

---

ILLUSTRATIONS.

PORTRAIT (Photogravure), <i>from a Photograph by G. P.</i>	
<i>Abraham, Keswick</i> . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
EDNA LYALL, aged 22, <i>with a copy of her first book,</i>	
<i>"Won by Waiting"</i> . . . . .	<i>To face p. 32</i>





## CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS—1857-1864

Birth and Parentage—Ancestors—Family life—First words—First recollection—Nurse—Childish terrors—Play—Heroes—Shermanbury—Brighton—Farnham—Bishop Sumner.

## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY DAYS—1857-1864.

“ ‘I pray God you may grow up a good woman.’ ‘I will, Daddy ; I really will,’ said Elfie.”—*The Burges Letters*.

ADA ELLEN BAYLY, more widely known as “Edna Lyall,” was born on Wednesday, 25th March, 1857, at No. 5 Montpelier Villas, Brighton.

Both her father and grandfather were barristers of the Inner Temple. Sir William Follett, a connection of the family, read with Mr. Bayly senior, in his chambers in King’s Bench Walk, which are still owned by Edna Lyall’s brother, the present vicar of Bosbury in Herefordshire, who is a member of the Inner Temple, though he has never been “called”.

Mrs. Bayly was a Miss Winter and descended from the family of that name, who, at the time of the Gunpowder Plot, were sturdy Romanists and suffered for the cause ; they were men of good standing and had an estate at Haddington in Worcestershire. She was also a descendant of the well-known Nonconformist divine, Thomas Bradbury, who in Queen Anne’s reign went by the name of “Bold Bradbury”. Another ancestor was the Captain Burges who was killed in a

naval engagement at Camperdown in 1797, and whose monument stands in the south aisle of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Thus we see that Edna Lyall comes of a fighting stock, and can understand something of the inherited generous nature which could not stand idly by, a mere looker-on, but must ever be helping "to right the wrong".

She was named Ada, after Dickens's gentle heroine in *Bleak House*—which had not been long published and which very justly created such a *furor* in the time of our fathers—Ellen was after a cousin, and, as is generally known, the *nom de plume* of "Edna Lyall" is composed of the letters of the three names. It is easy to picture her quiet, happy home from the delicate sketch she has drawn for children in *The Burges Letters*. The broad-minded, considerate and kind father, the quiet, loving, gentle but firm mother, who taught their children that it was better to learn to endure hardness than to have their own way in everything; the twin sisters so lovingly described as "the best elder sisters in the world"; the one brother who teased as brothers will, but never to hurt, as "there was always a twinkle in the corner of his eye"; and then the two little ones who, as their nurse said, could never be happy for long apart, and who grew up life-long companions and the truest of friends, proving the truth of Christina Rossetti's words—

There is no friend like a sister,  
In calm or stormy weather.

These all become very real to us as we read Edna Lyall's last book, and help us to understand the surroundings and gradual growth of character of the author.

The thought of our past years in me doth breed  
Perpetual benediction

is the quotation on the title-page, and she loved to think and speak of her early recollections and happy home at Brighton, which town always held a very warm place in her affections and was throughout her life the background of her dreams.

The first words recorded of little Ellie's (this was her home name by request of the elder sisters who were reading *The Wide, Wide World*) seem to strike the key-note of her life. Taken to church by her nurse at two years old, she startled the congregation by calling out in great glee, directly the preacher had given out his text, "Nanna! Nanna! he says '*God is Love*'!" and rather strikingly her first remembrance is of the romance of love.

"I was three years old," she says, "and was walking with my sister and our nurse, when suddenly we came face to face with the first romance that had ever touched our lives. Coming towards us we saw a certain kinsman who had always been a favourite in our nursery, and beside him walked a most beautiful lady; they stopped to speak to us. There was something impressive and delightful in their happiness, and we were laughingly threatened with banishment to the other side of the elder hedge unless we at once adopted the beautiful lady as our kinswoman. What did it all

mean, we asked. Why, to be sure, they were engaged to be married."

It has been said that Lord Shaftesbury owed the deep religious principles which ruled his whole life to the nurse of his early days, and indeed it makes one sad to think how carelessly children are handed over to some ignorant girl who understands nothing of the young, or of the careful training they need, spiritually, morally and physically.

But Edna Lyall and her sisters were blessed with the best of nurses ; not only was she a kind and judicious and loving woman, but her sympathies were wide and far-reaching. She was a great reader, and able—most delightful talent of all in the eyes of the children—to tell a good story well. She thoroughly understood her little charges, and when Ellie was naughty and restless would give her a pencil and piece of paper instead of punishing her.

In *To Right the Wrong* the character of the faithful Charlotte, who is "always wearing herself out on some one's behalf," is drawn from this friend of childhood, and indeed of a lifetime.

At three years old little Ellie, of all things, feared saying good-bye to those she loved, and she never outgrew this dread ; but when she says "undoubtedly I was born a coward," we at once call to mind her fearless upholding of all "unpopular minorities," and find it difficult to believe that one so ready to help without a thought of self could have had a struggle "to learn to be brave alone".



It is touching to read of how her terror of the old street fiddler, with such hideously crooked legs and deformed feet, was conquered. He used to prop himself up on two sticks and play melancholy, tuneless music, which to the sensitive, highly-strung little girl was of itself gruesome to a degree. Her eyes would grow very big, and she would peep out of the window with a shudder at the old man in his tall hat and ragged frockcoat. Her mother taught her first to pity him, and then a penny was given her, and though never ordered to take it him, it was suggested that he was a very poor old man. At last one day, coaxed by the elder sister and gripping hold of her hand, she screwed up courage to cross the road and thrust the penny on the poor old fiddler. "I am glad you gave it him," said her mother, "but you must learn to be brave alone," and when the fiddler came round again little Ellie took him the penny quite by herself, and in time grew positively interested in the object of her pity.

There was, however, a worse terror still to be faced—the terror of wickedness, and that is ever the most terrible to the pure in heart. Edna Lyall describes her first experience of it as follows. "Coming into my room one evening, about ten o'clock, my mother found me wide awake, staring in panic-stricken fascination at a cupboard opposite the bed. Sobbing and shivering I told her my story. I had heard the others say that while out of doors that afternoon a beggar-woman had followed them for a long way,

begging and protesting. At last my aunt had said to her, 'I think you had better go away,' and the beggar had angrily retorted, 'I hope the Almighty will say so to you at the day of judgment'. This cruel wish seemed to me the most horrible and heartless thing I had ever heard—the beggar must surely be a sort of monster of wickedness. If she could wish God to send us to hell, she was capable of anything, and the more I looked at the half-open cupboard, the more certain I became that this wicked beggar, with a heart full of hatred, was inside it and waiting an opportunity to murder us. With many comforting assurances I was led to that dreadful half-open door, and we shook every dress in the cupboard and looked high and low, and my fears were conquered by the truth. 'Now,' said my mother, 'I am going to give you a motto. It is just this, "Take the bull by the horns". Whatever it is that you are afraid of, make yourself walk straight up to it.'"

Many other ordinary fears of childhood possessed at times the particularly shy and timid little girl. The oyster-man with weird and melancholy voice crying down the street, the imaginary burglar under the bed or in the cupboard, and the terrible picture of the veiled prophet in *Lalla Rookh*.

She seems even as a child to have been a poor sleeper, and often spoke of lying awake and hearing the carriages called for the folk at some neighbour's party, and of the strange excitement it created in her. The waits, too, at Christmas were somewhat thrilling,

and, as she herself tells us, on Sundays in particular, she would keep awake till midnight in order to begin her imaginary story-games.

It is not surprising to learn what a large part in the child's life imagination played. How very real her dolls were to her. One is still in existence—"Hilda Marie Stanton"!—named for some unknown reason after Father Stanton. The chairs, too, which took the place of the dolls on Sunday, were as living children to her and each had their separate character. A very favourite ball, transparent and of a pink colour, perhaps for that reason called "Jelly," was for long a constant and much-valued companion, and when it came to grief was buried in the garden, and had erected over it a tombstone on which these words were written by its mournful little mistress:—

Poor Jelly! poorly died,  
Poorly buried, and no man cried.

"What is that?" said a friend, walking round the garden with one of the elder girls. "Oh! a pet of my little sister's," she said with evasion.

But most of all did the child's play consist of making up stories about her heroes, real or imaginary. John Hampden, William Tell, many of the old Roman heroes, Charles I. and then Cromwell, Mr. Fawcett (the blind member for Brighton) and Edith Wynne (the celebrated Welsh singer) were all surrounded with romance, and each played their part in stimulating thoughts of the ideal in the future author.

When quite a child she determined that she would

write, and when nine years old her mother wrote : " Little Ellie has taken to writing stories, and uncommonly good they are. I shall keep them for your amusement." The father's reply was : " Don't make too much of Ellie's stories ; teach her to be active and regular in her duties ".

Her day-dreams were, of course, much fostered by her delicacy of health and weak eyes, which enforced long hours of idleness. She often had to wear a shade, and, when her eyes were very bad, lie under the dining-room table. But when quietly sitting there among the footstools, she was in imagination having wonderful adventures in far-away countries, and seeing in her mind the most beautiful pictures and the most interesting people. Her sufferings never made Edna Lyall the least self-engrossed, but rather were all her life considered as experience—the " learning of a language, to enable her to understand others ". One is reminded of Robertson's words on the " Son of Consolation," who, in order to have the perfect gift of sympathy, something beyond commonplace consolation and the delicate tact which never inflicts pain, must be content to pay the price of the costly education and even as his Master must suffer.

Looking at the end of her life and seeing the result of this " costly education," one is apt to forget that it ever was acquired, and in later days her acquaintance would never have guessed the existence of the " hot temper and peppery disposition " which needed all her strength of character and vigorous self-control to keep

in abeyance. What a very natural and delightful description that is of the "Ministering Children" in *The Burges Letters*, the reaction after the good work done in the "best Ministering Children style" which ended in a wordy war and bed.

To her contemporaries the reminiscences of the early sixties are especially interesting, and one wishes that all parents of those days had been as wise as Mr. and Mrs. Bayly in forbidding *The Fairchild Family* and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.

The wholesome love of good literature was encouraged in Edna Lyall and her sisters by the reading aloud of poetry, the Waverley Novels, Roman history, Kingsley's *Heroes*, etc. Music was a favourite recreation ; the family were all musical, and even as children had sweet voices, and they were very fond of singing rounds and catches, started by the elder sister with her little tuning-fork.

Brighton, of course, was a large town even in those days, and though, when the summer came, the little girls were sent down to the beach almost every day in large leghorn flop hats and cool brown holland pinafores, the glare of the sun was trying for delicate eyes, and the children were frequently sent into the country to be refreshed by that delightful provision of nature, the greenness of grass and trees.

Perhaps it was continually being compelled to live in the shade which gave Edna Lyall her love for bright colours, and it seems to have been a regret in her childhood that the mother did not share this

partiality, but dressed her little girls very quietly, who often rebelled against the holland overalls and big plain pink sun-bonnets.

Shermanbury, not very far from Brighton, was the favourite holiday resort for the family, and very delightful to town children must have been the freedom of country lanes, the gleaning in the harvest fields, and the drives all by themselves in the donkey-cart to the neighbouring country town.

Farnham was also often visited in the summer, and there lived a large family of cousins to add to the joy of the holidays. In the introduction to Mr. Gordon Home's booklet on *Farnham and its Surroundings* Edna Lyall writes :—

“ Farnham has been my holiday home ever since I was four years old. Also in a sense I belong to the place, for my great-grandfather Newnham, a doctor, lived and died there, and his descendants still live in the town—indeed till three years ago [written in 1900] still lived in the same dear old two-storeyed house in West Street, whose plain grey front told so little of the cosiness within, or of the delights of the long-walled garden stretching down to the canal. Farnham, as I first remember it in the sixties, had a most picturesque old market-place, but on one day of the week walking was a terror to children used only to Brighton streets, for was there not a sale of live stock, when fearful horned beasts used to make us rush up Castle Street? To be sure, there were also horned beasts in the park, our favourite playground, but they were

amenable creatures intent on eating ; and there were so many other delights in the park that we could contrive to forget them. There were hawthorn trees to be climbed—one memorable one very near the castle was large enough to accommodate the whole cousinhood, five Brightonians and seven Farnham cousins. Then there was the great elm avenue with its long, stately, Cathedral-like aisle, and beyond one could generally catch glimpses of the bishop's deer with their branching antlers. . . .

“Old Bishop Sumner's arrival at church on Sundays in great state used to make an immense impression on us—indeed the most ecclesiastical member of the family once made bold to touch the hem of his garment as he passed in ! I am bound to confess that my memories of the kindly old bishop are much more mundane, and that, caring not at all for his episcopal robes, I thought his castle the most ideal place for games of hide-and-seek a few years later with his grandchildren, and have a specially keen remembrance of how after our game, in which an eerie terror of the haunted room mingled, we all repaired to the episcopal strawberry beds and feasted to our hearts' content. . . .

“The way up to the castle by the steps has always seemed to me one of the most quaint and picturesque bits of the little town ; to us it suggested that part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* where Christian, looking up, saw a lion on each side of the way : ‘The lions were chained, but [like so many of us] he saw not the chains’.”

## CHAPTER II.

SCHOOLDAYS—1865-1875.

School — Caterham — Books — Dancing — Charades — Father's and  
Mother's death—Boarding school—Schoolfellows—Note-books—  
Moody and Sankey—Lincoln.



## CHAPTER II.

SCHOOLDAYS—1865-1875.

“ We think it's not at school, but at home, that we really learn most, for when the elder ones or real grown-up people talk and we children listen, we pick up things much more interesting than the school work.”—*The Burges Letters*.

LIFE was not all holidays, and at seven years old little Ellie was sent with her next sister to a school for small children kept by two ladies, and after two years there they passed on to another day school to which the elder sisters had been. There Ellie was made a pet of by the big girls; and a story is told of her refusing to criticise the paintings of two girls, only saying “Comparisons are odious”. She does not seem to have been particularly studious, except at history or literature, and describes herself as having been incorrigibly stupid at mathematics and seldom deeply interested in science. Grammar was a great bugbear, and many of us can sympathise with the hiding of the grammar book in the hope of its being no more to learn, and with her chagrin when compelled to reveal the hidden book and to learn a great deal of syntax and write twelve times over in her copy-book in text hand “All good girls like grammar”. This did not improve either her temper or her writing, and

when she had shown it up she took a quill pen and made two big stars, and wrote in a footnote in her own niggling little handwriting, "That's a lie; they don't!"

At ten years old the little girl had measles, and as this left her rather more delicate and increased the trouble with her eyes, it was decided to send her to live in the country for a time, and she went for an indefinite visit to an uncle and aunt at Caterham, where she had lessons with the cousins, one of whom writes of this period as follows:—

"Ellie arrived on my birthday, which was being celebrated by the one and only Christmas tree we had in our young days. Such a pathetic little figure she looked, her poor weak eyes swollen with crying, travel-worn and weary. Her frock was white, and when the tear-stains were washed off her face and her dark hair put back neatly in a comb, she looked more cheerful. The hair was rather too much strained back over a high forehead, but it showed off her arched eyebrows and *piquante* little face, and she was a decidedly interesting-looking little girl.

"But she was far too home-sick that evening to enter into the enjoyment of our Christmas tree, and was only too glad when bedtime came and she could wet her pillow with her tears. The next morning she was more inclined to enter into what was going on, and in a day or two quite settled down into the family life. We became inseparable companions, and talked, as far as our elders and lesson hours permitted, morning, noon and night. She introduced me into a wonderful

and beautiful world of romance. We were seldom ourselves, but lived in a world of our own making.

"We quarrelled sometimes it must be admitted ; my cousin was a regular little 'spit-fire' if anything upset her. She would call me by a string of all the most dreadful names, and I would keep quite quiet and make no reply, until she finished up with the climax, as the worst possible that she could think of, 'Why *don't* you speak? You are so horribly *meek*.' That I never could stand, and my reply was so vigorous as to quite disqualify me from any claim to that virtue. Our quarrels were usually over nothing particular, but I see she refers in a letter of hers, written long after, to 'many pitched battles over Charles I.'. She always took up the side of any one who seemed to her oppressed or ill-treated, whether their ill-treatment was deserved or not. To her childish notions Charles was the ill-used person and therefore championed. Later on she came to see that the Parliamentarians also had a claim to ill-treatment, and that her beloved Charles was somewhat in the wrong. But as one of the reviewers of her books remarked, 'She was always able to see both sides of the question,' and would take care to have both villains and heroes belonging to each party.

"Our governess was a very thorough teacher and grounded us well in the 'Three R's' and in needle-work. Ellie always hated the latter ; arithmetic too she could never get on with.

"After a time my mother used to have us for

English reading and drawing lessons. We read *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, selections from Chaucer, Sir Walter Scott, Cowper, and other standard works.

“After she returned home, and only came to us during the holidays, these readings were continued. We read several of Shakespeare’s plays, each taking a part, and studied some of them thoroughly. One rule my mother made for us was, that never in the holidays were we to read a story-book before twelve o’clock. Ellie was speaking of this only quite lately, and said she considered it had been a most excellent plan, and that she owed much to it. ‘I feel quite wicked even now if I take up a story-book before twelve o’clock!’ she said.

“To return, however, to early days, we used to attend dancing classes in the neighbourhood, which were a great delight. We formed the most romantic attachment to the lady who taught us, and to be singled out to dance with her was a pleasure which brightened all the week! It was at these dances that we met a charming family of pretty little girls, one of whom became Ellie’s life-long friend.

“Occasionally we had the most delightful informal parties at the houses of two or three friends, games and impromptu charades, for which Ellie was always in great demand. Charades were also very popular with us at home. Sometimes they were got up quickly, more often they were somewhat elaborate affairs. One charade in which Ellie was a young musician was particularly clever. She sat on the

music-stool dressed in an Eastern-looking dressing-gown, with her hair thrown back loosely in true artist style, and inveighed against the maid-servant who came in with untimely reminders of dinner, or of visitors, always just preventing 'his' catching hold of the melody 'he' was seeking for.

"Often we acted fancy stories and once part of *Ivanhoe*. Tableaux vivants were also popular. *Ivanhoe*'s shield exists to this day, and we took a great deal of pains to make things correct. Ellie was always in her element in all this; we rarely attempted anything of the kind without her, and if we did it always fell flat.

"She used to write stories even in those early days; one of them we thought so beautiful that I undertook to copy it, and we bound it in some yellow writing-paper I had, which we greatly admired. It made three little volumes. I do not remember now what the purport of the story was, but it was somewhat of the Sunday-school type. The hero was a sentimental youth, over whose untimely death both author and copyist shed many tears.

"Towards the end of the two years she lived with us she used to write more elaborate tales on foolscap. One of them quite attained the length of a three-volume novel. This was re-written when at school, and was called *Cecil Reoghn, or the Warfare of Life*. The heroine was a great singer who brought up a little sister. It was never published, but a good deal of it was afterwards embodied in *Doreen*. The

old friend was scarcely recognisable. We thought it very beautiful in those days.

“When Ellie had been with us about eighteen months a change was made in our schoolroom. A young German lady came to teach us. After the somewhat over-strict rule to which we had been accustomed, this was a great delight to us, and I fear a great trial to the unfortunate girl. We were rather like a Jack-in-the-box whose lid was suddenly taken off! and the temptation to make the most of our liberty was too great for the four of us.

“The second term of her reign, Ellie and I had a consultation on the subject, and decided that it was our bounden duty to manage ourselves and the little ones, and the schoolroom became once more a place for learning lessons in—our governess learned English and we began to speak German. We invented a most original punishment for ourselves. It must have been Ellie’s idea, I think! Any one who during the day had laughed at any of our Fraulein’s odd mistakes, or otherwise behaved badly, had to sit on a high chair in perfect silence, after lesson hours, for five minutes. There were occasions when we all four sat in a row, for we were most fair in punishing ourselves as well as the younger ones. Our governess used to stare in wonder at us, and often tried to find out what the object of this extraordinary performance was, but it was kept a strict secret from her.

“After this term it was decided that my cousin should no longer form one of our schoolroom party.

Her mother was far from well, and perhaps wanted her little girl at home, or possibly she was so much better that there was no need for her to be in the country any longer."

Little Ellie returned to Brighton, but the home could never be quite the same again, for her father had died soon after she went to Caterham. Her mother and sisters still lived in the house in Denmark Terrace, to which they had moved some years before when 5 Montpelier Villas became too small for their convenience, and Ellie went again with her sister to the day-school to which she had gone before she went away.

But the second great trouble of her life was not far off, for when she was fourteen the most serious loss that a girl can have fell to the lot of her and her sisters, and they were orphans indeed.

Readers of *We Two* will remember the description of Erica's return home after her mother's death, but few realise that Edna Lyall was but recording, as she so often does, her own experience; for the sorrow was increased by the fact that the poor little girl was ill with scarlet fever at the time of her mother's last illness and in lodgings with a faithful servant, isolated, of course, from her own people and all the outside world.

"For those who have to come back to the empty house, the home which never can be home again, may God comfort them, no one else can."

And yet that it was home while the sisters and brother were left we see by the keenness of the pain the young girl at school felt when she heard that that

home must be given up. She writes of this in 1887 to a schoolfellow.

“ I remember so well the letter arriving which told me that my sister was going to be married and that our home would be broken up. I stood after breakfast watching girl after girl go by and wondering who I could turn to for comfort, and then I saw you whom I scarcely knew at all, and thought to myself, ‘ M. R. is good, I’ll try her ’. And you were so very kind and understanding.” But this was not until three years after the mother’s death. At first the guardians of the young people agreed that they should live on in the same house under the chaperonage of a lady, who would teach the younger ones. This arrangement lasted for about a year, and then it was thought best to accede to Ellie’s request and send her to a boarding school in Sussex Square. After about two years there, during which time she was confirmed by the late Bishop Durnford of Chichester at “ All Souls,” the school was given up and Ellie passed on with some of the other girls to Miss Chapman’s school in the Dyke Road. One of these schoolfellows writes :—

“ Ella, as we called her at school, was a gentle girl with a very quiet manner. I can never remember her quarrelling with any one, or saying an unkind thing of any one. I think she was rather too quiet and reserved to be what is called a popular girl, but I can see now how really nice she was. She had very delicate feelings. She was not physically strong, but while at school was always fairly well. She had a singularly



sweet voice, both in singing and in speech, and was passionately fond of music. I do not remember that she was thought clever at school, but we often talked together about the books she was going to write, and she then kept a note-book in which she entered any funny or interesting anecdote that she happened to hear. I met with one of those note-book anecdotes in one of her earlier books. She was a deeply religious girl always."

The note-book went by the name of "Cuttle"—readers of Dickens will remember the Captain of that name who always made "a note of it!"—and a succession of note-books were in use all her life. "The only collecting mania I have ever had," writes Edna Lyall, "was a rage for collecting proverbs, or quotations, or curious country sayings."

She seems at school to have lived much in an imaginary world, and spent every spare moment in writing or reading over her stories, and even then was as quietly observant as in later years, never appearing to be taking much notice or looking about, but seeing and noting many details which escaped her companions.

Her younger schoolfellows remember that she was always kind and had a fund of delightful stories to tell them. Her contemporaries were impressed by her "beautiful compositions".

In 1873, during the holidays, she was taken by an aunt to one of Moody and Sankey's meetings in the Agricultural Hall, and a deep impression was made on the young girl by the earnestness of the missionaries

and beautiful, pathetic singing of Mr. Sankey. She wrote from school afterwards: "I find Moody and Sankey's hymns a great help, and generally read one at night; they seem to put things clearly".

She was very happy at school, and wrote that the lessons were all very nice and the music perfectly enchanting, and that she had found a friend in the music mistress, who had promised to help her with information for her musical story. But the girls' schools of thirty years ago were very different to those of nowadays. Recreation was not sufficiently considered: there was no tennis, hockey or cricket for girls—indeed one of Edna Lyall's schoolfellows says she thinks they did not have more than half an hour's playtime in the day. They were sent out for long walks, but these were mostly to the cemetery—unfailingly so if they were in charge of the Fraulein! It was very cold up on the Dyke Road, but no coddling was allowed. The head-mistress, kind and much respected and loved by her pupils, was a stern disciplinarian, and no girl was allowed on the hearth-rug for a warm at the fire—rather severe training for delicate girls, if bracing and conducive to self-control.

When Ellie was seventeen the second of her elder sisters was married, and it was arranged that the two youngest should make their home with the eldest sister at Lincoln, who had married one of the Canons of the Cathedral. For Ellie, of course, there was another year of school, and then she too went to live in the Cathedral close.



## CHAPTER III.

GIRLHOOD—1876-1879.

Writing—Visits—Wales—Edith Wynne—Finances—Minster Yard—  
Parish work—Gaieties—*Won by Waiting*—*Nom de plume*—  
Biarritz—*Donovan*—*Their Happiest Christmas*—Mr. Bradlaugh—  
London.

## CHAPTER III.

GIRLHOOD—1876-1879.

"Of course all discipline is grievous, and you must not expect to be quite free from failures."—*Won by Waiting*.

THE most difficult years of a girl's life are those when she first leaves school, before she has found her place in the world or learned what she can do. As Dr. Tremain says in *Donovan* :—

"I think undoubtedly from eighteen to one-and-twenty is one of the most difficult periods of life. Boys, and in many instances girls too, begin then to have a good deal of liberty. The old discipline is cast off, they have to rule their own actions to a great extent, they have to face the problems of life, and forming their own opinions strongly on every point, whether it is beyond their comprehension or not, they battle along not unfrequently a misery to themselves and to their friends, till after dearly bought experience they at last settle down, more or less contentedly, with some of their conceit knocked out of them."

When there is a definite purpose and aim in life, when the boy or girl knows what he or she means to be and to do, it is in some ways easier, but in others more difficult for the start to be made.

Edna Lyall, as we have seen, was determined to be a writer ; she had "a perfectly clear consciousness that come what may" she "had to write," and many stories were already seething in her brain—in fact she had begun to keep what she called her "stock pot" and to work out the receipt for novels given in *Derrick Vaughan*.

"Conceive your hero, add a sprinkling of friends and relatives, flavour with whatever scenery or local colour you please, carefully consider what circumstances are most likely to develop your man into the best he is capable of, allow the whole to simmer in your brain as long as you can, and then serve while hot with ink upon white or blue foolscap, according to taste."

*Won by Waiting*, a story for girls, was her first published book, and this was begun soon after she left school. The Cathedral town there described is not Lincoln as often supposed ; perhaps living in a close herself it was natural that she should place the heroine of her story under the shadow of a Cathedral, but she always said that "Rilchester" was not meant for Lincoln.

Although for the first five years after leaving school this was Edna Lyall's home, she was constantly travelling about and paying visits to her many friends and relations. She often stayed with a sister at Beccles, was frequently at Farnham with the cousins, one of whom was her most intimate friend, and every year she visited the uncle and aunt at Caterham. In 1876 she went with them for her first visit to Wales, and

kept a journal describing the scenery very vividly and sympathetically. The minute descriptions are quite unusual for a girl of nineteen. Her love of music comes out in her reference to the Swallow Falls.

“About three miles from Capel Curig we got out to see the Swallow Falls, which very much delighted all of us who were not spoiled by larger ones. The best view is from the lower falls, and we sat there for a few minutes to enjoy the sight and sound, which latter was decidedly the grandest to my thinking. There were four distinct sounds of falling and rushing. I suppose Beethoven would have heard a sonata in it—there certainly was one.”

She was delighted to find a picture of Edith Wynne in one of the cottages, and was thrilled in seeing Holywell, the birthplace of the singer for whom she had such an admiration.

There is an amusing reference in one of her later letters to the state of her finances just at this age, and many a girl puzzled how to manage a limited allowance will sympathise with Edna Lyall in her efforts to “make an honest penny” when long before quarter day, finding herself reduced to fourpence, she sat up one night and wrote an essay on “Dress” (her one and only attempt at an essay), which was sent to *The Quiver*, but “declined with thanks”. However, her end was achieved, for this, coming somehow to the knowledge of her guardians, so moved their hearts that they at once increased her allowance! Of the home in Lincoln, Edna Lyall writes to a cousin :—

“I do wish you could just come and take a peep at us ; you can't think how charming everything is. The house is very old and crooked throughout, and quite unlike any I have seen before. The staircase is dark oak and runs up two ways, meeting at the top. There are only two storeys with attics over them and most of the rooms open out of each other, so that you might chase a person round and round and never come upon them. Would it not be jolly for hide-and-seek? It makes me long to play. We are making our room perfect by degrees, and it is altogether charming and has a most lovely view of the Cathedral. I can't attempt to describe *that* to you, it is far too lovely for words.”

Other letters speak of the parish work she took up in the poorest part of Lincoln. A district and a Sunday-school class were both of great interest to her, and sometimes she writes of the gaieties of the Cathedral town as follows :—

“We have had quite a gay time for Lincoln, a ball on Monday, a dance on Thursday, an evening party to-night, and another dance to-morrow. I enjoy it immensely once in a way, but should not care for it to go on much longer. I had *such* a dress for my first dance, so grand I hardly knew myself!! a very much be-bunched, be-furbelowed white tarlatan over Japanese silk, a coral necklace and sprays of ivy, ferns and holly stuck about.”

She had not much love for dinner parties—calls them “those dreadful institutions”—and says “we had two last Wednesday and Thursday. The only enjoy-



able part is the music afterwards, and that really was delightful, for one lady played most exquisitely."

In 1877 the sister next in age to herself was married to the Rev. H. G. Jameson and went to live in London, and by that time *Won by Waiting* was well in hand. The young author had never been in France, but by reading and imagination was able to give a real picture of the Auvergues and of Paris, in the opening chapters of the story. It was rather difficult to get books bearing on the Franco-Prussian War, then of comparatively recent date, and her chief books of reference were Felix Whitehurst's *Diary of the Siege of Paris* and the republished "*Daily News*" *War Correspondence* of Archibald Forbes.

Then came the question of a *nom de plume*, which in after years she rather regretted having adopted, but shyness and reserve naturally led the young girl to hide her identity, and she spent a whole afternoon with the letters of her name spread round her and moved them about until she formed the well-known name she chose. Unknown to herself she had fixed on a name from the Apocrypha, where Edna is mentioned as the wife of Raguel. This led one of her uncles to call her "Mrs. Raguel," and they had many a laugh together over it. When her books were becoming well known and she was constantly being asked for her autograph, she wrote on a post-card to him:—

"Mrs. Raguel's compliments, and she is much flattered and gratified to find that her spidery scrawl is worth 10s. 6d. When all other trades fail she will

certainly take to signing autographs for this advertising company, it would be better than penny-a-lining ! She trusts that all specimens of her beautiful and clear caligraphy will be carefully preserved by her friends and relations and laid up against a rainy day to be then converted into £ s. d. This admirably written post-card would doubtless pay the price of a pair of gloves, for instance, and should by no means be wastefully thrown into a rubbish basket. Mrs. R. is leaving England and would be quite willing to give old luggage labels after her tour to any needy autograph hunters, for that form of politeness is apparently worth much and costs little."

Edna Lyall was staying at Caterham when looking for a publisher for her first book, and her uncle went with her to Mr. Whittingham, who agreed to publish it if she took all risks. Shortly after this she went to Biarritz with a cousin and some friends, and there received the first copy of the bound volume, and writes to her aunt in her fresh enthusiasm :—

"It was *so* nice to find my book really waiting for me when we came back from the Pyrenees yesterday. I had hardly dared to let myself expect it. B. and I went into our room in the twilight, and I just asked her if any letters were there, thinking nothing of it, as she answered purposely in a very ordinary voice. Then to my surprise I found the thick white packet and flew for 'bougies' and matches ! The first few minutes is *very* delightful. Then comes the sobering sense of all the defects. It is sad to find how much one longs to



EDNA LYALL, AGED 22.

WITH A COPY OF HER FIRST BOOK, "WON BY WAITING".



alter already, and I suppose it will grow worse as one grows older. I do want number two to be much better. I am afraid the style is too colloquial in places and exaggerated in others. I have had a good laugh at two or three sentences to-day. Still I hope you will like *Espérance* a little, for she feels very much my child! I have not written more than a page since I came here and do not mean to; there is, as you say, plenty to take in, and oh! we have seen such lovely things last week."

*Won by Waiting* made no name for itself, and lay very much in oblivion until *Donovan* and *We Two* so stirred the reading public that the publishers of these books bought the copyright of this girl's story of a girl, and much to her annoyance republished it as a novel in the same form as the others.

"Number two" mentioned in the above letter was *Donovan*, which was begun in 1878, and even in the opening chapters one realises how much the author had grown in character, thought, expression and power. She was beginning to think more deeply, and ask questions as to the puzzles of life. But though living much with her hero in thought, she was never so absorbed as to neglect home life and social duties, though the latter seem to have cost her somewhat of an effort. To an intimate friend at this time she writes: "Do you know, reading *Two Years Ago* has given me a good lesson about *unsociability*. Elsley Vavasour's character is what I do not want to grow like. I'm afraid I'm like him in two or three

things ; it's dreadfully hard to me to talk or 'come out of my shell' unless I'm certain of at any rate some sympathy." She often said laughingly that "she liked to be met more than half way!"

In the same letter she mentions having just finished her children's story and being about to take up *Donovan* again. This was the little book called *Their Happiest Christmas*, which was published in a paper then current called *The Family Circle*. In 1890 this story was brought out in book form and dedicated to her nephews and nieces.

Writing from Lincoln, Edna Lyall also refers to the episode of Mr. Bradlaugh's rejection from Parliament, and says : "It makes me *mad* to see and hear the unjust way in which people treat him. Oh ! I *hope* he'll have strength to act conscientiously about the oath. I am looking forward quite anxiously to Friday's paper. How about that life of him? I should so like to see it. Did you read it?"

In 1880 Edna Lyall left Lincoln to make her home with her sister, Mrs. Jameson, with whom she lived for the rest of her life. To her great delight this home was for a time in London, the very place of all others for a student of human nature and of books, which last were easily accessible at the British Museum.



## CHAPTER IV.

FAILURE AND SUCCESS—1880-1883.

Imagination—Problems—The “No”—Light—Rev. J. Vaughan—  
Rev. P. Newnham—Rev. C. E. Steward—Italy—Innsbruck—  
—Reviews on *Donovan*—Letter from Mr. Gladstone—*We Two*  
success—Typewriter.



## CHAPTER IV.

### FAILURE AND SUCCESS—1880-1883.

“Christianity can only be vindicated by deeds, can only be truly shown forth in lives.”—*We Two*.

ONE of Edna Lyall's earliest letters which mentions “Donovan” was written in 1878, when the young author, who was staying in London, describes a walk on a wet November day to York Road, to fix on the house in which he should live while a student at St. Thomas's Hospital. She mentions even the number of the house, which “of course won't appear in the book, but I like to know it”; and with her thoughts full of her hero she walked on to St. Thomas's and across Westminster Bridge, taking in every detail for after-description. People have often wondered that a girl leading so sheltered a life as Edna Lyall should have been able to draw such a vivid sketch of a gambler and card-sharper; but it must be remembered that the imagination of a true artist with the help of keen observation, ever on the alert, is able to picture scenes which have not been personally experienced. As she wrote in after years to an actor: “I suppose, just as you can act certain parts utterly foreign to your own nature, and can represent wicked-

ness you can't possibly have come across—such a character as Nero, for instance—so in the same way I may have a certain insight which makes me able sometimes to draw a life-like villain. It is not that we know that particular form of evil, but that—from without—a power comes to us and makes us able to portray in a way that we can't explain."

It was whilst staying at a Hydro in the north that she had seen characters which suggested those of the Frewins—father and son—and once she had been in a railway carriage full of card-sharpers. She had many interesting, helpful talks at that time with Prof. Rhys Davids, who was staying with her cousins there, and he writes: "We had many talks of a deep and earnest kind, and I was much impressed with her high ideals, and courageous efforts to be true to them".

Edna Lyall was only twenty-one when the desire to write of a perfectly isolated man first possessed her, because she found herself compelled to face the problems which "Donovan" had to face, and to find an answer to the questionings which come at some time to all those who go below the surface. There are some simple, trusting, honest folk who are able to go on as they have been brought up without question; but others are differently made, and when difficulties arise these "spectres of the mind" can only be laid by bravely facing them.

It was said by Julius Hare, "Man's first word is Yes; his second, No; his third and last, Yes". Edna Lyall had now reached the "No"; she was verifying

the "Yes," finding the reason for the hope that was in her, and because with characteristic thoroughness and courage she shirked nothing, as of old her "fears were conquered by the truth," and many and many a questioner has been helped by her strong grasp of it, and by the "knowledge which by suffering entereth".

During this time *Donovan* came to a standstill; where, precisely, in the book the pause comes, one does not know. She writes of this to a friend in January, 1881.

"One reason why I did not write was that I felt that it was almost impossible to take up the thread as it were after such a long silence. And then this last year and a half has brought so many changes to me, and has so reversed much of my former way of thinking, that it seemed hard, or rather, perhaps, hypocritical, to try to go on as if there had been no change—as if I were what you believed me to be. . . . But now that you have written, and now that I begin to see my way a little, I will tell you, dear K., what is unwritable on paper somehow. I have been through a sort of cloud of doubt, but just when I needed it, I came across a man, a cousin of our mother's, who has helped me—is helping me—out. He is a Cornish clergyman, and I suppose what people would call a Broad Churchman, and a saint. Now you see why I could write to ordinary acquaintance but not to my oldest friend. We had gone deeper, both in talking and writing, than just the mere surface of things, and

I hadn't the heart to write to you, when I was so utterly unsettled. I begin to be very happy now, and we shall still have our Monday collect together. . . . You ask if I am writing now. No, not just at this time ; that is, I am in the middle of a book, but am waiting till I have learnt a little more."

A few weeks before this she had written to another intimate friend for her birthday, and said, "Did you ever dread growing older? I used to at one time, but I am coming now to think that 'it is a consummation devoutly to be wished,' such good things come with the years ; crosses in plenty, of course, but with them *light*. Sometimes I think we don't enough realise that to get light is the end of our existence, our whole education down here being to fit us for the meeting 'face to face'. Writing that reminds me of Cousin P. We were out together one day on the cliffs, and he suddenly turned round and said, 'Look, child, what do you see over there?' The sun was blazing down across the sea in a great wide stream of light ; of course I could see nothing. 'We can't bear the full sunshine all at once, you see,' he went on. 'It is God's greatest mercy to keep us in the dark or the twilight sometimes.' But oh ! C., it is *grand* to think that the little flashes we can have now, and which are such wonderful joy, are just nothing to what we shall have when we are out of this in the unseen world."

There has been much misunderstanding on the part of the public with regard to Edna Lyall's religious views, but at this time few even of her nearest

knew what she was passing through ; she never gave up going to church, she was simply seeking for the truth, and much pain was given to her and those who loved her in after years by false assertions and reports. She was, as a child, brought up in a liberal, comprehensive atmosphere of thought, and taught to see good in all forms of religion. There is a summary of her father's friends in *The Burges Letters* which shows how he valued the friendship of men of all schools of thought, "all good men, whatever their views". The Baylys had attended Christ Church, where Mr. Vaughan was Vicar, and he and his family were some of their greatest friends. Many of Mrs. Bayly's relations were Nonconformists, and when staying with them Edna Lyall always went to service at their chapel.

It will be remembered that one of her schoolfellows says she was always a deeply religious girl, and this is evident from her letters. In one from school she writes to her cousin at Caterham : "I get so puzzled sometimes, I seem to have lived without realising the great things, and yet I have been confirmed and really *have* thought seriously" ; and, as we have seen, she was not one who could ignore these puzzles or lazily set them aside unanswered. The "Cousin P." referred to in one of her letters was the Rev. Philip Newnham, who was to Edna Lyall what "Charles Osmond" was to "Erica" in *We Two*—indeed the sketch of Charles Osmond is largely drawn from him. He was a man whose mind was of rare depth and

originality, who treated religious subjects in an outspoken, unconventional fashion, and though living in a lonely west country parish never gave his people platitudes, but made them think and go below the surface and ask themselves what they meant by words which they were in the habit of saying so glibly and mechanically.

Edna Lyall saw a great deal of him at this time, and attributed much to his help as friend and teacher at this most critical period of her life. Many were the visits that she paid to him and Mrs. Newnham while writing *Donovan*, and much correspondence passed between them. He is the "one" to whom the book is dedicated.

Some years later than this when she had written *Knight Errant*, he writes to her:—

"God bless your birthday and send you many very happy ones, and make you each year more and more a power for Him in this world of His—leading and teaching hearts to think and to recognise the Beauty of the Beautiful. *That* I am convinced is the sum of your special work in the world. . . . The more I see of your writings the more I feel assured that your mission is to set forth the Beauty of Beauty—others are better able to show the ugliness of ugliness. But I recognise certain tender touches in your brush which mark your special faculty as decidedly growing. God bless you in it."

The Rev. C. E. Steward of Southampton was also a great help to her at this time, and years after when

he died she spoke of him as being one of the very few men with whom she could ever talk out things quite freely and to whom she could always turn in any difficulty.

In March, 1880, Edna Lyall went with friends to Italy for the first time and spent Easter Day at Bordighera ; from there they went over to Monaco, where she learnt much that was useful in writing *Donovan*.

The next spring she went to Italy again with the same friends and spent Easter in Rome, going on to Florence and Venice and passing over the Brenner to Innsbruck. There the hotel in which they were staying caught fire one evening, and a scene of dire fright and confusion ensued, but happily no lives were lost, and in a few hours the fire was got under. There are letters of Edna Lyall's to her cousins with vivid descriptions of this experience, which she says she is going to bring into her next book, and, sure enough, in the chapter called "Right Onward" in *We Two* it is there in almost exactly similar detail. She had some anxious moments over her note-books of "Donovan" and "Erica" and some valuable letters, but a vigorous search amongst the medley next day was rewarded by the finding of her missing treasures. She had also some of her MS. of *Donovan* with her, which she says was "naturally her first thought !"

Though *Donovan* was not finished, the next book was already simmering in her brain. Every one knows the incident which had suggested the subject of *We Two* : how a line in the *Daily News*' account of Mr.

Bradlaugh's imprisonment in the Clock Tower, saying, "Mr. Bradlaugh has telegraphed for his daughter," made her picture to herself with her ever-ready sympathy and vivid imagination the devotion of his daughter at such a crisis of his stormy life and the strength and support it must have given him. "Erica" was at first to have been "Helen," and is referred to in a letter written in 1880 as "my Helen Raeburn who . . . slowly evolves from the first tiny germ which indignation at the Bradlaugh episode gave rise to. I think she *will* be written after all. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth must speak."

Some ten years later Edna Lyall came to know Mr. Bradlaugh's daughter and they became real friends, and she wrote to her in reference to the play of *The Sign of the Cross*: "As you say, what surprises and pains one most is when those who have been persecuted turn persecutors. It was that and the shameful injustice of it all which made one feel so bitterly discouraged and ashamed when your father was ill-treated by those who said they were Christ's followers. You say that it seems to be a law of human nature, and indeed it seems like it. I see no hope for the future unless there is something above human nature. But why are we to despair for the *race* when over and over again we see *individuals* rising above this hateful tendency? witnessing, it seems to me, whether they be noble atheists or noble Christians, to something greater than ourselves."

When Edna Lyall returned from abroad her home



was once again in Lincoln. She was very sorry to leave London, but Mr. Jameson had taken a curacy at St. Peter's Eastgate in Lincoln, and they were to live once more in the quaint little house in Minster Yard (which was vacant then) described in *To Right the Wrong*.

In the meanwhile publishers had been found for *Donovan* in Messrs. Hurst & Blackett, to whom she had an introduction from George MacDonald, who was connected by marriage with Mr. Jameson's family, and for whom Edna Lyall had a very sincere admiration. The book came out in three volumes in 1882, and had some good reviews, some scathing. It was read and liked by an extremely small circle and then was dropped, and its career seemed to be over for ever. Edna Lyall, writing at this time to a friend, says:—

"I was so very glad to hear from you, though rather amused that your letter with its half-expressed fear that the 'large amount of praise' would turn my head should happen to come on a night when I was *raging* at the injustice of the horrid reviews! They won't all be like the *Morning Post*!!! I have had one in . . . and another in . . . The first reviewer hasn't read enough of the book to have even the faintest *notion* of Donovan's character, and consequently tells a whole string of downright lies about him. The second has skimmed the book very cursorily, and all the moral his density has got out of it is this: 'Miss Lyall's object is to show how much more of Christ's spirit the agnostic has than the Christian,' therefore, the man

goes on to say, what an immoral moral it is! when all the time it is no more in the book than it's in the Bible!! As far as any help goes they are utterly worthless, and I confess are most trying to the temper. You don't know the aggravation of having a column of lies about your own work published to the world! I shall need *every word* of *encouragement* to keep me from growing bitter under this. If the reviewers had taken the trouble to give the book anything like a fair reading I shouldn't mind, and as to their hateful little bits of praise and commendation to me, I care nothing for them when they libel my boy, and misunderstand him so utterly. However, I've had a great deal of comfort from private sources, and though I believe you in your ascetic soul think kindness and appreciation and sympathy of that sort dangerous—I think exactly the opposite."

This was certainly a case of "righteous indignation," and we know that in spite of all the injustice she did not grow bitter!

But there was one who early appreciated the young author and whose praise was worth much to her. Writing to her brother in 1883 she tells him of this: "I know you will sympathise in my great happiness. About ten months ago I screwed up my courage and sent Mr. Gladstone a copy of *Donovan*. There came a polite letter from one of his secretaries with Mr. Gladstone's assurance that 'he would examine it with interest,' and there I imagined was an end of the matter. But last week I had a delightful letter from

Mr. Gladstone himself! I'll enclose a copy of it for you to see—the original being too precious to be risked in the post! Isn't it enough to turn an author's head?" It was as follows:—

"10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,  
"27th April, 1883.

"DEAR MADAM,

"When you did me the honour to send me a copy of your lately published novel, *Donovan*, I returned my formal thanks. I have since employed my scraps of time in reading it through, and I wish now to make an acknowledgment related not only to your courtesy but to the work itself. I cannot but admire the fidelity with which, while it avoids being didactic, it conveys true and deep knowledge, and combines a thorough equity and charity towards an atheist with a not less thorough homage to the authority of truth. Let me presume to add my poor tribute especially to the first volume as a very delicate and refined work of art.

"I remain,

"Dear Madam,

"Your very faithful and obedient

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

A review of the book appeared in the Secularists' paper, *The National Reformer*, and this first opened up a correspondence between Mr. Bradlaugh and Edna Lyall. She was then writing *We Two*, and with the thoroughness which no doubt appealed to Mr. Brad-

laugh, himself strong in that virtue, she plied him with questions on Secularism of which she wished to learn all that was possible. An interview was arranged referred to in her later letters.

“I can see him now so plainly sitting at his desk and telling me to write whenever I liked, ‘and as I am a busy man,’ he added, ‘I will ask you to do it in this way—take a sheet of paper, write your question there, and leave me the opposite side of the sheet for the answer’.”

Again : “The other day I came across the notes written down immediately after my talk with Mr. Bradlaugh in August, 1882. To the best of my recollection they are in his own words. I was then writing *We Two*, and he spoke much of his own views on death because I was very anxious to represent the Secularist position quite fairly. I little thought that in a few years he himself would be ‘done to death’ as surely as Luke Raeburn was—only by inches. People have accused me of exaggeration in *We Two*, but Raeburn’s story seems to me far *less* pathetic than the story of his prototype.”

It was Edna Lyall’s intense love of justice, her dread of anything approaching religious intolerance or oppression and her quick sympathy for the oppressed which made her send help to the Election Fund. This was indeed a brave and unconventional thing for a girl to do, especially from the ecclesiastical atmosphere of Cathedral precincts. One does not hesitate to say she did well, but suffered for it. Writing

in 1885 to Miss Picard, a friend of her childhood, she refers to this.

"So that gossip has reached you! It is perfectly true that I in common with many other Christian Liberals subscribed to the expenses of the last election at Northampton, feeling very strongly that its member had been most unjustly used, and that it was the duty especially of those Christians who hate bigotry and injustice to protest in this practical way. Of course I should not have written—should not have been able to write—*We Two* if I had not known that Secularists are frightfully misrepresented by their orthodox opponents, and been brought into close contact with them. It is too big a subject to write about in a letter, and I can only ask you to believe that your 'Morose' acted from conscientious motives. It has perhaps been misunderstood and has certainly cost me dear in many ways, but in the words of Erica—written before I had tested the truth of them myself—*Mens conscia recti* (my father's motto, by the way!) will carry me through worse things than a little slander."

The name of "Morose" was given by her governess to the remarkably silent girl of those days, who at meals would scarcely say a word. In another letter Edna Lyall laughingly refers to this nickname. "I send you with my love the enclosed photograph of your 'Morose'. By-the-bye, I was so much amused in reading a play of Ben Jonson's to find that he has a character called 'Morose'—the husband of the 'Silent Woman'!"

At the end of the year 1882, Edna Lyall writes : " Erica is, I hope, getting on. I do want so much to read her to you. She has just come back from Innsbruck. It was such fun describing the fire. Will you tell me of any questions which you would advise me to send to Mr. Stewart Headlam? It is wonderful how one is brought to know just the people most necessary for one's work. This has been a wonderful year altogether, and I thought it was going to be such a hard one, watching *Donovan* devoured by the critics ! I really can't tell you what beautiful things I've heard lately about my 'Child' ! Yet, nevertheless, I am sometimes sick with fright at the thought of sending Erica out into the world. Do tell me of any part in which you think I speak bitterly. It is so hard to speak strongly against bigotry and injustice and yet to avoid bitterness."

*We Two* being finished the next thing was to find a publisher, not such an easy matter to Edna Lyall in those days. The manuscript was refused by half-a-dozen publishers. One firm from whom she had hoped great things kept the MS. for a month and then declined it with thanks, and two years later, when her fame was made, must indeed have been chagrined to learn in answer to a letter begging her to write and let them publish a novel like *We Two*, that they had missed the chance of bringing out that very book. Finally, in 1884, it was taken by the publishers of *Donovan*, both copyrights being bought by them for £50. With this step accomplished the author

went with some cousins on a yachting cruise in the Mediterranean. They touched at Algiers and then put in at Gibraltar, but to their annoyance were ordered out of the harbour at once on account of one of the cholera scares. The letters that had arrived for them were handed up on board with tongs, and amongst them came a huge budget of reviews, the contents of which revealed to Edna Lyall with startling suddenness that at last she had succeeded. The book, for which she had thought her friends would cut her and which so many publishers refused, had made her name. It did not create nearly as much hostility as she had expected, the hard blows were few and the kind words many, both from Christians and Secularists, and from that date her correspondence was large and diversified, publishers were no longer sought for but sought her, and she had no further difficulties on that score.

Hitherto the MS. had been written in her own handwriting, but about this time she read an article on typewriters, by Proctor the astronomer, in his paper *Knowledge*, and that led her to try one, though some of her friends asked her how she could possibly write a love scene with that "tram-car bell ringing"! However, in about three weeks, when she could work at an average speed for her own composition, she was perfectly used to it, and never even noticed the bell more than one would dipping one's pen in the ink.

## CHAPTER V.

EASTBOURNE—1884-1886.

Home life—Sunday class—St. Saviour's—Canon Whelpton—*In the Golden Days*—Humour—Slander—Archdeacon Wilson—*Faust*—*The Autobiography of a Slander*—Norway—Mrs. Mary Davies—*The Knight Errant*.



## CHAPTER V.

EASTBOURNE—1884-1886.

“Character is not ready-made, but is created bit by bit and day by day.”—*In the Golden Days.*

IN 1884 the family moved from Lincoln and settled in Eastbourne, where Edna Lyall lived for the rest of her life. One wonders which of Dickens's books cheered her through this move, for writing to a friend she once said: “You will be thankful when the moving is over—it is a wretched process. I always keep a volume of Dickens to read at odd moments during house-moving. I believe he helps one to keep one's temper.”

The house to which they went is in College Road, and stands back from the road with a little garden in front. It is a detached and gabled house, nearly covered with ivy and Virginian creeper. On the top floor, with an extensive view over trees and gardens of the Sussex Downs, is the room which was appropriated to the author for a study. It is said very truly that rooms betray the characters of their owners, and this was no exception to the rule. It was snug and cosy and essentially home-like, books and pictures abounded, and their numbers were always being added

to until even the door was ornamented with a photograph. A long low bookcase stood on one side of the room, and this was mostly filled with novels. Another corner was devoted to sermons of Robertson, Maurice, Kingsley, Westcott, Phillips Brooks, Thomas Erskine, and many others. There was also a poet's corner. Her library represented her work, chosen not so much for pleasure as for use ; her books were in fact the tools in her workshop. Histories of the seventeenth century abounded, and many books of reference on the subjects of her novels filled the shelves. The pictures were many and varied and changed from time to time, and as years went on the furniture was moved about, and often would be shifted two or three times in a year, for Edna Lyall shared the fascination spoken of in Fanny Kemble's *Life* that she and her people had for "turning a room right round". In one corner at this time stood the typewriter, and over it hung an illumination, "In Thy Hand are we and our words".

It was here that on Sunday afternoons Miss Bayly made welcome girls who were in business. When she first came to Eastbourne she took round a notice to some of the principal shops of the town, saying that a Bible Class for girls would be held at 6 College Road. Not knowing who was to take it, the first Sunday two girls arrived feeling very shy ; next week they brought a friend, and gradually the numbers increased until the little room was packed as full as it could be, and indeed was overflowing. One of these first members remained in the class for the nineteen years during

which it was held, and describes how they learnt who their teacher was. One Sunday when choosing a book to read, Miss S. took up *We Two*. "You should read *Donovan* first," said Miss Bayly; thus *Donovan* was taken, and so interested the girl and her friends that when she brought it back and asked for *We Two*, she said, "We have so much enjoyed it: who *is* this Edna Lyall?" Imagine her surprise when with a quiet laugh, her teacher pointed to herself!

The afternoons were very informal: some prayers, a few verses of the Bible read round, a short talk about them from Miss Bayly, one or two hymns, and then the reading of a story or some other interesting book, generally one to make them laugh. Sometimes there was music, to which the girls themselves contributed, and when tea came in the children of the house would come up to help in handing it round. Edna Lyall always tried to interest the girls in public questions and encouraged them to help in times of distress at home and abroad, and politics were often discussed. Those who attended will ever remember the simple, earnest, helpful words, the welcome to all, whatever their creed, and the friendly advice and sympathy always ready for those in any difficulty or trouble who would remain for an intimate talk.

Mr. Jameson being assistant curate at St. Saviour's, the family attended that church, and Edna Lyall often said that she felt more at home there than in any other since the days of her childhood in Christ Church, Brighton. The service was musically and

very reverently rendered, the building was beautiful but not in any way ornate, and the good, liberal-minded, charitable and fatherly vicar, Canon Whelp-ton, commanded the respect and love of all his congregation. As may be traced in her books, Edna Lyall had a great love for the Church services, which have come to us through so many generations. "It is strange how the Psalms always do fit in with our life of to-day" was an experience of her own which she put into the mouth of "Clemency" in *To Right the Wrong*. To worship in old churches was a special delight to her. Later on, she gave three bells to St. Saviour's, which are called "Donovan," "Erica" and "Hugo".

When first she came to Eastbourne she was writing *In the Golden Days*; it was nearly finished, and came out in the following spring. It is an historical novel of the seventeenth century, a very favourite period with her. Of course this book involved an immense amount of reading and research, but I think I am right in saying that even the sharp eyes of the critics only once detected her in an inaccuracy of statement, historical or otherwise. She was scrupulously particular to mention no fact which she had not verified, but few realise what a real labour this meant. In a letter of later date she refers to this one exception, when a question was raised as to whether Algernon Sidney was at Penshurst after his father's death. She quotes at length from Ewald to prove her case, showing how fully she had gone into it, and says :—

“ I think I am within my rights as a writer of a seventeenth century novel in assuming that he *may have been* at Penshurst in April, 1683 ! At any rate, I think I might safely defy any one to prove that he was not ! I shall be much chagrined if they can prove it, for you know my passion for accuracy. I still suffer pangs for having named ‘ Tate and Brady ’ as a familiar couple before their psalter was published.”

Algernon Sidney was one of her heroes of history, and in April, 1884, she writes to Miss K. Gurney at Brighton :—

“ I think I told you that I am now at work on a story the scene of which is the London of 200 years ago—the time of the Rye House Plot. Algernon Sidney is one of the historical people whom I have tried to draw, and it struck me that *you* being one of the ‘ Sidney Gurneys ’ might perhaps know more about him than ordinary people. Have you any special knowledge of him ? He does not come much into the ordinary histories, but I have been able to hunt up a good deal about him at the British Museum ; only what I have got makes me long for more ! He must have been a *splendid* man.”

The quotations at the heading of each chapter are taken from the poets of the seventeenth century or earlier. This was rather difficult to carry out. Usually Edna Lyall kept note-books of favourite quotations and selected them on Sunday evenings.

The plot of *In the Golden Days* had been in the

author's mind since she was a child staying at the charming old house in Suffolk where her aunt lives, which is fully described in the story under the name of "Mondisfield". Speaking of her capacity for hero-worship, she says:—

"After a course of old Roman heroes, I became a devotee of Oliver Cromwell, and the Cromwell worship was much aided by visits to kinsfolk living in an old Suffolk hall—the 'Mondisfield' of *In the Golden Days*. Charles Lamb says that 'nothing fills a child's mind like a large old mansion peopled with the spirits of deceased members of the county and justices of the quorum'; and undoubtedly I owe much to that quaint old house, with its hall and musicians' gallery, its hiding-places, its old walled garden, its moat, and its park with the 'stews' in which the abbots of St. Edmondsbury loved in days of yore to fish. . . . Unable as yet to write with any speed or comfort, I had plenty of stories simmering in my brain, and long before the plot of *In the Golden Days* developed itself, I used to play in the old minstrels' gallery at a game in which a yielding and over-submissive younger brother was tyrannised over by an elder brother and guardian. The characters were perfectly real to me, but it was only when visiting 'Mondisfield' that I cared to play with them. Years after, when *We Two* was finished, and I was vainly trying to become interested in another story, it chanced that I was staying at the old Suffolk hall. There were long, quiet mornings, and for a study a big, old panelled room hung round

with family portraits, and there was a steady table for my typewriter, but somehow the new story would not 'work'; I grew to hate it. One day, while pacing up and down beside the bowling-green, the two brothers, who had been the hero and the villain of my childish game, suddenly returned like old familiar friends. It was borne in upon me that I must write their story, which bit by bit unfolded itself. With great joy I for ever forsook that modern story which would not 'work,' hunted up all the old records and histories which the house could furnish, and when the plot was completed hurried off to the reading-room of the British Museum to study the time of Charles II. and the history of the Rye House Plot."

In April, 1885, when the book came out she sent a copy to her aunt, Mrs. Warner Bromley, at Badmondisfield, saying:—

"I am sending you and Uncle Warner a copy of my new story, and hope you will approve of 'Mondisfield Hall' in the 'Golden Days'! It has been a great pleasure to me to write about it and to walk about the dear old place in imagination."

Of Mary Denham, the heroine—and one of the most delightful heroines in fiction—she wrote some years after the book came out:—

"Why do you say that Mary Denham is ideal, and an ideal not to be met with in real life? It is a charge that has been brought against me before. And yet I know more than one woman whose love has been essentially the same as hers. Don't you think that

love (not the selfishness which often usurps the name) has the power to bring out the ideal side in the character of both men and women, if only we have the will to 'think and do always such things as be right-ful'? And, after all, when we say 'ideal,' what is it but the 'real'—the true, best side of the nature—the part that will last."

In May, 1885, she wrote to Miss Gurney:—

"*In the Golden Days* was in its second edition within three weeks and is doing well. I shall look forward to your critique when you have read it, as you know I always value private ones far more than public, and think them more truthful and useful. H. and I are going to meet the Chinese ambassador and his wife this afternoon; we have been getting up some part-songs in his honour. I think it will be rather fun."

There were many "At Homes" and other claims of society for Miss Bayly at Eastbourne, but she was very quiet and retiring—a "lion" that could not roar to order: as she once wrote when on a round of visits, "I get tired of prancing about as lioness! and always feel *such* a tame one!" She felt her shyness a great deal, and wrote to a friend: "What wouldn't I give for your power of talking! but I was born to be a listener, and never could manage general conversation though now and then enjoying a *tête-à-tête*".

She certainly was the most appreciative and sympathetic of listeners, with such a keen sense of humour that it was the greatest pleasure to tell her a joke.



She had a very low, sweet voice and never could make deaf people hear, but many agreed with an old gentleman of her acquaintance who used to say: "I can't hear what Edna Lyall says, but I do like to make her laugh!" She would shake with laughter in the most satisfactory way to her entertainer! The want of humour in her books has often been remarked, and it is a singular fact that she did not tell a funny thing in a funny way, though full of the saving grace of humour itself, and this was often an immense help to her and her friends in times of sickness and trouble.

To counterbalance the elation that the success of her books might at this time have been giving the author, came rumours of the gossip which so hurt her and all who cared for her. Amongst others, Mr. Buxton Moorish wrote to her in reference to *Donovan*, which had been refused by a book club in which he was interested, on the plea that the author was an atheist and a follower of Mr. Bradlaugh, reputed to be the real hero of the novel. The following is her answer to him:—

"6 COLLEGE ROAD, EASTBOURNE,

"25th February, 1886.

"DEAR SIR,

"Thank you very much for kindly giving me an opportunity of contradicting the slander as to my personal belief. Curiously enough, the very same story was brought to my notice last week at an 'At Home' in London, and I can't imagine from whom it can have originated. I am not an Atheist, but a

member of the Church of England. I have never sat down to write without asking God's help, and whatever is good in my books is solely due to Him.

"I shall be very grateful if you will contradict the story, for I confess it has pained me. Not that it matters much what people think of me individually, but it seems a little hard that what is false should be interfering with the influence of the books. I do not intend Raeburn for Mr. Bradlaugh; none of the characters are meant for photographs of living people, but I know Mr. Bradlaugh personally, and quite admit that the history of Raeburn's persecutions and even the broad outlines of the character were to a great degree suggested to me by the study of his life. The Secularists consider Raeburn to be a life-like portrait of their leader; to my mind he is what Mr. Bradlaugh might have been had the circumstances of his life been less hard. Any one who reads the *Biography of Charles Bradlaugh*, published by Remington & Co., will see that Raeburn had in comparison an easy time.

"I was delighted to hear from Mr. Wilson, and value his opinion very much. Thanking you very much for your kind words about my books,

"Believe me, dear Sir,

"Yours very truly,

"ADA ELLEN BAYLY,

"'Edna Lyall'."

The Mr. Wilson here referred to (now Archdeacon Wilson) was then Headmaster of Clifton College, and

he had been so impressed with *Donovan* that he wrote to the publishers for the author's address, and then sent her a letter of warm appreciation. He is a friend of Mr. Buxton Moorish. To a schoolfellow about this time she writes on the same subject.

"I was delighted to hear from you this morning, and I am very glad you asked me point blank about that horrid report which has lately been set afloat about me. It has been giving me great trouble during the last few months. It seems that some one is going about reporting 'on good authority' that I am an Atheist. I am a member of a Church of England Society for meeting Secularists and trying to win them back to the Church, and my books *Donovan* and *We Two* were written in the hope that they might help some who are struggling with the doubts which beset so many of us nowadays. So I feel it rather hard to be accused of Atheism, and cannot think how the report has been started. I did, in common with many other Christians, strongly disapprove of Mr. Bradlaugh's exclusion from Parliament. It seemed to me most unjust, and any one whose work led them at all among the Secularists could not but see the fearful harm which that injustice did to the cause of Christianity. Politically I think Mr. Bradlaugh may do good work, but of course in other matters I could have no sympathy with his works or his views—indeed, my life has been chiefly given up to working against them. I shall be very grateful if you will contradict this slander if you have any opportunity,

for though they tell me I ought 'to rejoice and be exceeding glad,' I am afraid I shall never get beyond enduring it with a fair amount of patience. But of course it will be all right in the end. And if publicity has pains it certainly has pleasures, for I am constantly hearing from people who have found help and comfort from the books, and it does make me very happy to have been used as a messenger, though one has to be on one's guard not to consider whatever is good in the books as anything but a message entrusted to one."

It was just then that Edna Lyall went up to town to see *Faust* at the Lyceum, of which she writes to Miss Picard:—

"I have just been up to London for two parties and to see *Faust*. I was delighted with the latter. It is so wonderfully effective. We came back believing much more in the devil. Irving's Mephistopheles is marvellous—I never saw anything finer—and the scenery is exquisite, several of the scenes in Nuremberg with the lovely old houses, and one awful scene, a witches' Sabbath on the summit of the Brocken, at the end of which everything turns to molten fire."

Here is the germ of that cleverest (as many think) of all Edna Lyall's books—*The Autobiography of a Slander*. I do not know which came first, the "At Home" where she heard the slander referred to in Mr. Buxton Moorish's letter, or her visit to the thrilling representation of the "father of all lies," but it is easy to see how the one thought acted on the other, and in the autumn, when, as we shall find, the

slander had grown to still more alarming proportions, the result was that brilliant little book, which quickly reached its twenty-four thousandth edition! It came out first in a paper cover, with a capital design of a serpent crawling out of a tea-cup. When next year it was bound in boards, the author was disappointed that this had to go. It was translated into German, French and Norwegian, and had an enormous circulation. It is the only one of her books with an unhappy ending, but she used to say "it had to be," though it cost her many a tear!

Edna Lyall seems always to have had the outline of two or three stories in her brain at the same time: though writing the *Knight Errant*, into which she put the experience of her travels in Italy two or three years before, notes for the *Hardy Norseman* and *Derrick Vaughan* are in the same little pocket-book which she took to Norway, where she spent the months of July and August with a cousin and a friend, who writes:—

"Our journey to Norway in 1886 was a great delight. She was ready to enjoy everything, and to make very light of travelling difficulties. . . . Her gentle, sympathising manner found a hearty response amongst the refined Norwegians, from the clergyman and sportsman to the boatman and the village fiddler; all were willing and pleased to give her the information she was seeking about people and country, and which she turned to such good account in the *Hardy Norseman*. Our first Sunday in Norway we attended the

little village church by the fjord. The building was far too small for the requirements of the parish, and consequently four services were held consecutively. We entered at the beginning of the second to find the church *packed*, and the air hot and stifling. I was obliged to force my way out at the end of the third, but Ellie would still remain, that, as she told me afterwards, she 'might show these peasants that in joining them at the Holy Communion she too was *one with them*'. One day I had arranged to go on a long and difficult excursion, and Ellie preferred taking a drive instead. Owing to an accident to the boat, I did not return to the hotel till two o'clock the next morning, but had been able to send a message to Ellie that she need not expect me till mid-day, so she had gone to bed without any anxiety; but immediately she heard my voice she came to me, and then for quite two hours was running about in the dreary, dark hotel to see that hot water and food were prepared and the drenched garments were properly dried, and this was all done so lovingly and tenderly, and as if it were really a *pleasure*—she never seemed to give a thought about her *own* comfort, but could care only for me! One felt during the journey that Ellie was not travelling for the love of seeing a new country, but that her book was ever uppermost in her thoughts. The tiny note-book was frequently in use; and once I remember, when we were driving through scenery of a novel and most interesting character, she would talk only of the 'villain' of her story, till at last I said,

‘Don’t have a villain at all,’ for I wanted her to enjoy the lovely bits of country we were passing through ; but it was of no use, and I had to listen to a long dissertation on the necessity for having a villain in a book.”

Two young men they came across joined them in some excursions, and proved very amusing companions. During a walk it was discovered that one of them was the author of *The New Democracy*, which he had previously sent anonymously to the author of *Donovan* as a mark of respect. The two authors now found much in common. But one of the greatest pleasures of this tour to Edna Lyall was the meeting and making friends with Miss Mary Davies—the renowned singer—who was travelling with her father. She gives the following description of the meeting :—

“In 1886 English tourists had not over-run Norway in their thousands as they do at the present time, and Stalheim, where I first met Edna Lyall, was then a primitive post-station with a small inn, very different to the huge caravansera there now. My father and I stayed at Stalheim a week, and during our stay three ladies arrived, obviously English, very quiet in manner. We were the only English visitors, but there were a few Norwegians. However, we did not speak until a day or two later : finding ourselves fellow-passengers on the steamer between Gudvangen and Laedal, we got into conversation with them, and as none of us knew each other our talk was free, and touched on many topics of mutual interest. I found my com-

panion very sympathetic, and full of interest in the country and its lovely scenery and dignified peasantry. Amongst other subjects we touched on writers, and how disappointing it was sometimes to find the personality so far below the ideas expressed in their works. We mutually agreed to the suggestion which I hazarded, that they were also mortal like ourselves, and put their best selves into their books. I little thought I was then speaking to a writer whose work had impressed my mind very deeply just before leaving home, and to whom I felt much drawn on account of the liberality of thought in her book, *We Two*. In fact I had quashed my first impulse, which was to write and thank her for it, lest it should appear insincere. It was not until a week later that we met again, and Miss Bayly had seen and recognised my name in the hotel book at Saerdalsoren, where we all landed, but from whence my father and I left after a few hours' stay. When we arrived at lovely Balholm, who should come to meet us at the little landing-stage but the three ladies, and the one with whom I had had the conversation on the boat soon began to talk to me of some mutual friends we had, one well-known singer in particular. I was delighted, but still in ignorance of who my companion was. However, the talk turned on a novel she was writing about the musical profession. I pricked up my ears at once, and then somehow Miss Bayly let drop 'my two books'. 'Which two books?' '*Donovan* and *We Two*.' 'Why, you are not Edna Lyall!' I said.



‘Yes, I am,’ she replied quite simply. Well, I then remembered in a flash the very personal remarks I had made about writers and their disappointing personalities, and when I had recovered my surprise and found my tongue again, I begged her to forget all the silly things I had said. She was highly amused and laughed heartily, and said ‘Oh! but I felt so dreadfully mortal all the time!’ From that time we became very fast friends, and remained so till the end. I can truly say that Edna Lyall did not confine her best thoughts to her books, for she was greater in herself and in her nobility of mind than even the best of her writing.”

All who knew her endorse this and say she was much better even than her books, in intellect, character, and every way. It was indeed what she was, not what she seemed to be, not what she did, not even what she wrote, that carried such weight and shed so wide and strong an influence on all with whom she came in contact. There is a long piece much marked in her copy of Stopford Brookes’ *Fight of Faith* on the unconscious influence of one’s inner life: “Still further is this true if you be a producer, send forth books, pictures or music, if you speak speeches, or sermons, or lectures. Even through this work the tone of the inner life penetrates, and by that more than by actual thoughts or things expressed your work influences. . . . Take care that your whole inner life be ennobled.” These are underlined passages, and in the carrying out of such principles lay the secret of Edna Lyall’s influence.

But to return to Norway. Miss Mary Davies and her father were leaving for England, but such a friendship begun knows no ending, and a correspondence was commenced as soon as Miss Bayly came home. Her first letter to Miss Davies is dated 11th September, 1886, in which she sends her photograph, "taken to please the photographer, in rather an absurd position with an empty tea-cup! On a hot afternoon in June it felt a most hollow mockery." The next letter refers to the most distressing gossip, which had grown rapidly, as "ill weeds" do, and was making much mischief. She writes to her new friend about it as follows:—

"Do you get at all aggravated ever by being gossiped about? I have heard such extraordinary things about myself lately, all said to have been told on good authority. Some insist that I am an Atheist, others that I am a Unitarian, and the last report was that Edna Lyall was in a lunatic asylum! Sometimes one can laugh, but at the same time it is rather horrid!"

She writes of this in later years to Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner:—

"I think the short story you heard of must be one I published in 1887, *The Autobiography of a Slander*. On coming back from a delightful tour in Norway in '86, I was greeted everywhere by an absurd story that I was mad or in a lunatic asylum, which naturally gave one a sort of shudder. I had become accustomed to hearing that I was dead or married, had

gone over to Rome, had become an Atheist, and so on, but this madhouse story was given with so much detail, and became so generally believed, that it has been a great annoyance both to me and to my people. It set me thinking on the gradual growth of such lies, and then the story of the 'slander' took a Russian turn, mainly because I had been very much interested in two of Stepniak's books, and because the kidnapping of Prince Alexander seemed to me so brutal, and was the general topic in the autumn of '86. I am sending you a copy of the *Autobiography* with my love."

It was discovered that an impostor in Ceylon and on her voyage home had been impersonating Edna Lyall, and had deceived many people. The only possible explanation of this "lunatic" slander seemed to be that this woman was really mad. This induced Edna Lyall to reveal her identity, and many learnt for the first time that she was Miss Ada Ellen Bayly, living at Eastbourne.

In October of this year when she returned home she wrote to Miss Mary Davies to say how delighted she was to see that she was coming to sing at Eastbourne, and how nice it would be to meet again and talk over Norway.

She was exceedingly busy that autumn, "head over ears" in work, finishing the *Knight Errant*, which came out the following March—and digging her knife into "slander"!

## CHAPTER VI.

IDEALS—1887, 1888.

“Carlo ” and Idealism—Self-sacrifice—Nephews and nieces—Yachting—*Derrick Vaughan*—Dr. Walsham How—Norway again—Provst Kielland—Death of Rev. P. Newnham.

## CHAPTER VI.

IDEALS—1887, 1888.

“I am quite unable to put into words my friend’s intensely strong feeling with regard to the sacredness of his profession. It seemed to me not unlike the feeling of Isaiah when in the vision his mouth had been touched with the celestial fire.”—*Derrick Vaughan*.

EARLY in 1887 the *Knight Errant* was published, and in a letter to Miss Mary Davies, Edna Lyall says:—

“I can’t tell you what pleasure your letter gave me ; it came just when I was feeling very miserable about these fearful earthquakes, and quite cheered me up. I am delighted to know that you like *Knight Errant*, and of course your opinion means much more to me than the opinion of most people. I am longing to hear your criticisms and to talk it over with you.”

Edna Lyall often confessed that Carlo was her favourite of all her heroes, but he has been much criticised as too idealistic for real life. She writes to a friend some years after the book was written :—

“You will certainly charge me with idealism in the case of Carlo, and I must plead guilty to the charge. The face is merely described from a face I chanced upon in Italy, but having exchanged only half-a-dozen words with its owner, I know nothing of his character.

In spite of such trivial faults as a hasty temper and a love of ease, I think Carlo is perhaps nearer the ideal we all struggle after than most mortals ; yet I hope he is not an impossibility, and indeed do not believe him to be so. This much I *know*, that when a hard thing is put into one's life the strength is given to face it—given to us ordinary mortals—not only to people like Carlo. It is in small everyday matters that we all so often fail, and say and do what is wrong, chiefly perhaps through a sort of unreadiness, which I shrewdly suspect comes from our habit nowadays of rushing from one thing to another and not allowing time to realise the Unseen.”

Again she writes :—

“ You know Carlo really had and showed that he had a quick temper, and as one review puts it was full of ‘human weaknesses,’ though I quite admit that in the end he reached pretty nearly to my idea of perfection in a man. But taking into account the lives of his father and grandfather, and his own natural gifts, and remembering the strength of his faith, I do not think I have drawn an impossibility. Of course such specimens are rare, but has not our readiness to believe that the command ‘Be ye perfect’ is impossible something to do with the rarity ? ”

As in the words of old George Herbert :—

Who aimeth at the sky  
Shoots higher much than he that means a tree.

Referring to a relative, she says :—

“ He was in some respects the model of my *Knight*

*Errant*, and it always makes me wrathful when I hear people declaring that all men are selfish."

Of the title she says:—

"I laughed a little over the worthlessness of titles when you told me of Lord —— of ——. But I do set great store by the title of 'Knight Errant,' which can be won by every man."

In a letter at the beginning of her career Edna Lyall speaks of ideals as follows: "It is against all my principles to draw absolutely ideal characters. Study from life and *then* idealise; but to idealise and spin fabrics from one's own brain is not art".

The author was also anxious to emphasise that though doubtless a more difficult life, that of a public singer is not an impossible one to live nobly and as a Christian. It was while she was yachting in the Mediterranean in 1884 that she wove the plot and thought out most of the details of the story, and "the yacht was so kind as to be becalmed for a whole day just opposite his [Carlo's] home".

Edna Lyall's great love of music has been commented on in the account of her childhood, and, as she says, no one brought so much pleasure to her as the celebrated Welsh singer, Edith Wynne, for whom she always felt gratitude and affection. Quite unknown to herself, she was by her beautiful voice and perfect oratorio singing giving untold delight to her small devotee at Brighton, who was led by this devotion to a public singer to take the greatest interest in the musical world, and in time evolve the stories of

*Carlo Donati* and *Doreen*. Music was the truest rest and refreshment to her ; listening to it she would be quite lost to her surroundings. She played the piano a little and at different times studied the violin and guitar.

The chief *motif* of *Knight Errant* is that of self-sacrifice. Indeed this is a prominent feature in all Edna Lyall's novels ; and it has often been remarked how deep a note of pain runs through her stories, but it must be borne in mind that it is always pain useful for education, triumphed over and not triumphant. Edna Lyall once wrote of Charles Dickens that she thought his great influence is due to his very wide sympathy. He appeals especially to that love of home and of cosy interiors which is found in almost every heart, and was certainly in hers in a large measure. Her descriptions of home life and the sanctity of family affection are very attractive, and she took pleasure in drawing a picture of happy married life complete with the blessings of children. Though this was not her lot, she loved to go to weddings, and always held that it was happiness to see the happy. She was not one to shrink from the pain that love brought into her life, and it could not sour her. She learnt what she wrote, that to be lonely taught one to look out for the lonely, to serve them, and her happiness was not in what she could get but in what she could give.

She writes of her "almost ideal home" and of her sister's children to whom she was devoted as almost like her own, saying once after being away :—



“As you guessed, I was delighted to be at home again, and quite agree that ‘coming back’ is the best part of going away. The children here are almost like my own, specially M., the eldest, who has always slept with me, and is growing up into such a dear little companion.”

Her nephews and nieces are often mentioned in her letters with the love and pride of a mother, though she said she could not imagine what that must be, for “that of an aunt was huge,” and she thought maiden aunts had a capital time of it! In Lincoln days she writes to a friend of her little niece:—

“I am sure you will be glad to hear that she is such a good little radical that last night she lay awake till I came in from the ‘Band of Hope,’ quite unhappy because having vacated our room for Baby we were bereft of Mr. Gladstone’s picture. I actually had to fetch it for her, and on the way heard an eager call, ‘Auntie! auntie! bring Mr. Bright too!’ Having fervently embraced them both, she had them put where she could see them on waking in the morning and fell asleep happily.”

“Auntie” taught each of them in turn. They went up to her study for half an hour in the morning before she began to write, and learned to read, to say the catechism and repeat poetry. It was considered a great honour to be her pupil, and promotion indeed from the nursery world! She writes of one of the youngest being very anxious to come, but says she much prefers to have one at a time, and thinks five

years old is quite soon enough to begin. Something of what she taught them may be gathered from the story she tells to a friend of one of the little ones.

“She happened to be sleeping in my room. Like most children she woke very early, and would lie playing quietly and talking to herself in a whisper so as not to disturb me. One morning I heard her saying softly to herself, ‘God is our Father, and He loves everybody in the world very much—and nothing will ever make Him change’. It was just the echo of what I had been trying to teach her—dear little soul! and to hear her chattering to herself about it in the darkened room was very sweet.”

The children’s hour after tea was always religiously kept, and very often the whole family danced together. One winter Miss Bayly writes :—

“It is very delightful to have all the eight at home together, and they have kept us merry all through this bitter weather. Indeed if it were not for daily dancing and romping with the children, I don’t know how I should exercise at all as they won’t let me go out.”

Another letter says :—

“Forgive this dreadful scribble; a grand battle is going on between five of the children and an imaginary dragon, and the shrieks over the slaying are rather distracting.”

Her sitting-room at the top of the house was convenient for and often turned into “home” in games

of hide-and-seek. She had, as may be seen in the few beautiful little sketches of children in her books, a sincere love for and sympathy with them ; never talked to them "as if they were playthings, pet dogs or kittens," but as reasonable beings. A tiny incident will show how her wonderful power of putting herself in another's place reached also to the little ones. Walking in the street one day a friend remarked carelessly on an untidy child whose stocking was coming down ! "Poor little girl, how uncomfortable it must be," was Edna Lyall's answer.

This summer, 1887 (Jubilee year), she was yachting again with her cousins, and writes of it from Wales to Miss Mary Davies :—

"I have just returned from a yachting cruise which was very enjoyable. We were at the naval review at Spithead, and had a splendid view of the fleet as we were sailing about in that neighbourhood for several days."

This experience was brought into her next book, *Derrick Vaughan*, where Southampton Water is thus described :—

"I admit on that evening—the tide being high—the place looked remarkably pretty : the level rays of the setting sun turned the water to gold, a soft luminous haze hung over the town and the shipping, and by a stretch of imagination one might have thought the view almost 'Venetian'."

To a friend who had been visiting Southampton Edna Lyall writes :—

"Did you enjoy Southampton? I hope you had nice weather there; it is a place that depends so much on sunshine. On a really bright, clear day one can well believe that Watts had Southampton Water and the country beyond in his mind when he wrote—

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood  
Stand dressed in living green!

But in bad weather it is a most depressing town."

Derrick Vaughan's experiences as an author were much the same as those of Edna Lyall. I believe the idea of the young man's self-sacrifice and devotion to his father was first suggested to her one day in church, when a decrepit old man, leaning on the arm of a fine strong young fellow, walked slowly up the aisle and passed her. The story came out first in *Murray's Magazine*, and of the dedication of the book she wrote the following year to her friend Mrs. Mary Davies:—

"6 COLLEGE ROAD, EASTBOURNE,  
"5th April, 1889.

"MY DEAR MARY,

"I am writing to ask if I may dedicate to you a little story of mine, *Derrick Vaughan, Novelist*, which is now coming out in *Murray's Magazine*, but which will appear as a 2s. 6d. book on the 1st of June.

"Let me have just a line to say 'yes' or 'no' as you think best. But I hope it will be 'yes,' that I may have the pleasure of giving this little sign of my loving admiration of the chief songstress of Wales.

“Are you never coming to these regions again? Be sure to let me know if there is any chance of it.

“In great haste,

“Yours lovingly,

“ADA ELLEN BAYLY,

“‘Edna Lyall’.

“Do you know you have never sent me your promised photograph, and there is a particularly nice frame ready and waiting to receive it?”

In the spring of 1888 Miss Mary Davies had been married in London, and Edna Lyall at last had the desire of her childhood in meeting Edith Wynne, who was also one of the guests at the wedding.

In April, 1888, Miss Bayly spent a few days with Dr. Walsham How, and writes of them to her sister-in-law:—

“I had such a nice visit at the Bishop of Bedford’s. He is a wonderful man, so genial and kind and so very good. Miss Yonge was staying there too and Miss Jean Ingelow. I liked them both very much—though at first Miss Yonge seems very haughty and alarming. It is only her manner, though, for she is really kind, and she has a capital fund of good stories which amused every one. Archdeacon and Mrs. Farrar dined there on Thursday—they seem very pleasant; and dear Mrs. Charles was there—the author of the *Schönberg Cotta Family*.”

In the early summer another trip to Norway was planned with one of her married sisters and some

friends, and the author stayed with a Norwegian family. She writes of this to Miss Peck, the lady with whom she had travelled in Norway before :—

“I spent a most delightful five weeks there this summer and we had such glorious weather. I left in the *Eldorado* on the 5th of June, travelling with Mr. Kielland's daughter who had been spending three months in England. She is such a charming girl, and she and I had one of the little deck cabins and were most comfortable—except for a few minutes on the second day. As we reached Stavanger there was the most glorious sunset I ever saw. We changed steamers here, spent the night in the stuffy little cabin of our old friend the *Folgefonde*, which was already occupied by six Norwegian ladies, and reached Hangesund next morning. Here I spent a delightful week with the Kiellands. They are *such* nice people, and though the country round is bleak and bare, yet it was most interesting to have such a glimpse into the home-life. I have made ‘Flad-brod’ and potato-cakes myself—just think of that!—and every one was so kind and hospitable—in fact with parties and bouquets and presents and kindness I was quite spoilt! Afterwards I went on to Bergen, where Fróken Selboe was equally kind and took me about everywhere, and the next day my sister M. and Miss C. and Mr. E. C. joined me and we had a charming tour. After seeing Bergen and the old wooden church near it, we went down the Hardanger, not to Odde but to Eidfiord, and the next day did the Voringsfos. It is a *splendid* fall,

and I never before saw such an enormously wide rainbow in the spray. The walk up to it, seven miles, is most glorious too. I rode, but it was purgatory—a Spanish saddle and such giddy climbing work. That night we went on to dear little Ulvik, where we spent a quiet Sunday. Frue Helane made us most comfortable. I called on the Budes and they seemed so pleased. The Balone looked just the same. It was quite full of country people come for a great open-air service. It was pretty to see the women all tramping down to the fiord in their white caps and to hear them next morning singing hymns. We then went on *viâ* Eide and Vossevangen to Stalheim. There is a new hotel manager and it is all so well arranged. It was evening when we got there, and oh! that view—you can just picture it, all grand and purple, with just, on one peak, a tiny patch of the pink after-glow. After two days we went on to the Noerfiord and then to a place called Marifjaeren on the Lysterfiord. Then we went up the Jostedal, a grand and little-known valley. We slept in a tiny station where we could only get eggs, rusks and coffee, and where the whole population came and stared at us. Hardly any ladies had stayed there, and oh! the primitiveness of all the arrangements! After that we went by land to Sognedal on the Sogne, then down the fiord, passing dear little Balholm, where I had a talk with the Kuiknes, who were as charming as ever. Then on to Hafstad fiorde and by steamer from there by Hornelen, the grandest cliff in the world, to the Nordfiord. We stayed at Oldoren, not

far from Loen, and had a glorious day for the Brigsdalsbrae. We also came in for a charming country wedding. After that we went back by sea to Bergen and so home. I am more than ever in love with both people and country. . . . My Norwegian story is finished and comes out next January in *Good Words*."

Provst Kielland writes of the visit mentioned in this letter as follows :—

"My family and myself have the liveliest recollections of the stay of Miss Bayly with us in Hangesund in 1888. She lived in our house for a week. When the *Hardy Norseman* appeared, we saw how keen an observer of everything she had been, as we found hints of all sorts from our home. I am sorry to tell that I have no letters of hers left, though I have had many. Our acquaintance began in 1886, I think, in Ulvik in Norway, where my wife and I had to cross the line of her camera, when she and her relative, Miss W., photographed. It occasioned a little conversation that led to the ladies accompanying us on a tour in the afternoon, Miss Bayly having first asked permission from her chaperon, who graciously granted the permission as she had seen me preaching in the church the same day. Miss Bayly made a great impression on me, but still I was very much struck by learning from Mrs. Mary Davies that she was an author. She did not look to be in that way. I bought her books and read them with the deepest interest. Then our correspondence began, brought about by Mrs. Mary Davies. Miss Bayly explained to me the Norwegian



part of the *Hardy Norseman* and asked my advice. Her idea was that the failure was to be brought about by speculations in timber, but as the scene necessarily was to be Bergen, I showed her that she must change to speculations in fish, and as the herring fishing in Iceland just then drew the attention of the business men on the west coast, I proposed to engage Frithof in this. Miss Bayly sent me her manuscript, which I corrected in respect of the use of the facts, with the result that there is only one mistake. There is written in the book that the telegram that discloses the complete disaster comes 'to Granton' instead of 'from Granton'. When Miss Bayly stayed with us she went on Sunday to church. She wished to partake of the Lord's Supper, which afforded me great pleasure, as she freely confessed her belief in Christ. . . . I had translated our liturgy to her, so she spent a good Sunday. Miss Bayly is not much known in Norway, but highly appreciated by those who know her books. *A Hardy Norseman* was given in one of our greatest newspapers, *Verdens Gang*, which paper had a very sympathetic article when the news of her early death came. For myself I loved and admired Miss Bayly very much. She was so kind-hearted and good. Her sincerity and frankness were extreme. Never have I met a lady with a fame so completely free from ostentation, perhaps with the exception of Mrs. Mary Davies, who is her equal in this respect. I consider it a privilege of my life that I knew these two friends and that I had a little place in their recollections. . . .

If you would tell the family of Miss Bayly that her name has a sacred place in my family, and that we very often talk about her and look at her portrait in our family album, I should be glad."

This year was full of anxiety, for her cousin, Mr. Philip Newnham, was steadily losing strength and suffering at times very severely, and in November her "prophet," as she called him, died. She went to the funeral at Farnham, and writes of it to a cousin with many loving inquiries after his widow, and says:—

"The services in church are to me very beautiful to look back on, and I am thankful to have been at Farnham all this time. . . . The sunshine and that lovely strong wind blowing helped me through I thought."

The loss of this friend was a serious one to Edna Lyall, for she was accustomed to send him her MSS. to read, and many and helpful were the suggestions and criticisms which he made on them. During the last year they had been corresponding about *A Hardy Norseman* which she was then writing.

In December, 1888, her next historical novel, *To Right the Wrong*, was begun.



## CHAPTER VII.

ILLNESS—1889-1891.

*A Hardy Norseman*—Illness—Personal appearance—Christmas—Death of Mr. Bradlaugh—Letters to Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner—Italian Lakes—*Max Hereford's Dream*—Hampden House—*To Right the Wrong*—Ilkley—Bangor—Bishop of Wakefield.

## CHAPTER VII.

ILLNESS—1889-1891.

“Her notion of love was simply freedom to love and serve.”—*A Hardy Norseman*.

IN January, 1889, *A Hardy Norseman* came out in *Good Words*, and very soon after this Edna Lyall's health began to fail. Her letters had for long told of great pressure of work and her correspondence had grown very overwhelming. In four years she had published four books, each of which had taken a good deal out of her, and an author's profession takes up far more time than people imagine. She wrote “If only the days would not fly at such a pace one would be thankful. I wonder if they go slower to the Norwegians! Somehow there did seem to be leisure there in the very atmosphere.”

While in Norway again false rumours as to her private life had been afloat. It was said she was married, and even the name of her supposed husband was given, for which she thought “they” really ought to be prosecuted. It was also reported that she was ill, though, as she wrote shortly after to Miss Picard, she had had no illness since childhood except whooping-cough, and none before that but the ordinary

childish complaints. But, alas ! before a year had passed after writing as above, Edna Lyall experienced her first real illness. She was not one to give in readily, and wrote once to Mrs. Mary Davies about a cold which had prevented her going up to town as she feared travelling would not help her to get rid of it, and would not bring her that "healthy mind in a healthy body" at which she was aiming. "As to taking care of myself, I really will try to do so. My cold is much better, almost gone, and I had such a long time with no regular work that I am very anxious to get into regular ways again. I never write if I am really knocked up, but I confess that it seems to me wrong to give way to that sort of all-overishness which comes often to people of the thin-skinned and ultra-nervous order. I quite agree that work must in a way be spontaneous—that is, you must begin with a strong desire to express something, but when your idea is once formed I do not think it is good for one either physically or morally to wait till you are in a particular mood."

Just before Christmas, in 1888, she writes of it being "a horribly busy time of year with engagements every day," and for some weeks before she failed she had been feeling very tired and overdone.

It was in April, 1889, that Miss Bayly was taken seriously ill with pericarditis, and was for weeks in bed, often not allowed to stir hand or foot, but nursed devotedly by her sister and friends who gladly came to help. The opening pages of the little book *Max*

*Hereford's Dream* (the first written after her illness) bring vividly before one's eyes the sick-room from the patient's point of view. "Wonderfully patient," they said of Edna Lyall, but "under a mask of passive quiet there raged" with her, too, sometimes, "a consuming impatience, and under an assumed hopefulness a real despair". The descriptions of the kindness of acquaintances, tactful and tactless, the little daily routine and jokes of a sick-room, the approaching night and the preparations for it, the striking clocks and weary sleepless hours, and the flickering night-light, are all part of this year's experience.

She slowly recovered from this illness, but naturally after this her heart was never very strong. In the autumn of 1889 there are a few letters which speak of her convalescence and hope of going abroad in the spring. Her friend Mrs. Mary Davies came to Eastbourne to sing, and the following letter, written in November, tells what a pleasure this was to her and also first mentions *Doreen*.

"Just one line to tell you how much A. and I liked your flowers; it was so good of you to send them. I can't tell you how I enjoyed your visit—it was a sort of moral sunshine and fresh air to me!

"I did not recollect it when you suggested my writing a story on Ireland, but oddly enough, when I was ill I used to amuse myself by thinking over the possibility of re-writing and altering the plot of my old musical story. The heroine, a soprano, was Irish, and I think a certain amount of politics might be intro-

duced, though I don't think I could ever write a novel the scene of which should be chiefly laid in Ireland. To do that effectively you must have lived for years in the country. The worst of it is, I fear, even if I tried to prevent it, the heroine would grow a little like you, though of course I should not be so impertinent as to intend her at all for a portrait. She would, for the sake of the plot, be obliged to have a quicker temper! and at one time to break off her engagement and quarrel with her lover, though, of course, in the end it should come right. Her name is Doreen (a strong accent on the last syllable). It is an Irish name which much takes my fancy. But 'Doreen' shall never come into existence if you have the least feeling against her. She could not in any case be written for some time as my next novel is already planned and begun, so you have only to say the word and she shall disappear even from my brain!"

There is one more letter of interest written this autumn to another friend.

"It is such a comfort to be getting better again. The illness was a grand experience though, and I hope it will not have been wasted on me. Every one was so kind and good, not only one's own real friends but mere acquaintances and even total strangers. I long now to be at work again, but it will have to come by slow degrees, and to feel that there is a good prospect of getting back to real sound health again ought to keep one patient. I shall send you *A Hardy Norse-*



*man* directly it appears in one volume. I am delighted that you like it."

On sending a copy to another friend she mentions "a very good review in Saturday's *Athenæum* to cheer me in the 'flat swamp'."

Christmas of 1889 had scarcely passed when Edna Lyall was again taken seriously and suddenly ill with peritonitis and severe rheumatism, which meant much suffering and weariness and months of bed.

Her sitting-room at the top of the house was turned into a bedroom, and again friends came to help nurse and read to her by the hour as soon as she was strong enough for it. Walter Scott, Mrs. Gaskell and Dickens were some of her favourite authors.

All through the spring she was kept in her room. One fresh delight came to her in March, when another little niece arrived, though she felt very much not being able to be with her sister, and the enforced separation was a trial to both.

In June she was able to be moved to Caterham, where on the top of the Surrey hills in the lovely country air she soon got stronger; but from this illness must be dated the delicacy from which she suffered for the rest of her life, and it was some time before she was allowed to renew her writing. She had now to realise the dreadfulness of being a sort of semi-invalid all one's life, from which her heroine in *A Hardy Norseman* had shrunk; but she "took the bull by the horns," and, as ever, made the best of what she had left.

In the summer she paid visits to relations in Devonshire, at Bath, Caterham and Farnham, and when she returned home again in September wrote that she "was feeling *much* stronger and better, but have to be careful as to getting over-tired or taking cold".

It was just at this time that my friendship began with Edna Lyall. She was then very frail-looking and pale, perhaps to the world in general a plain woman, but one "whose face was lighted up by that wonderful spiritual beauty which now and then startles the dwellers upon this earth," and was full of a quiet, strong, restful sympathy.

Her kindly instincts understood  
All gentle courtesies.

And

An inborn charm of graciousness  
Made sweet her smile and tone.

She was of medium height and slight. Her hair was very dark brown and turned back from a broad intellectual forehead; the eyebrows beautifully marked and arched; dark blue-grey eyes, wonderfully tender and expressive, "an outdoor sign of all the warmth within smiled with her lips," but one might see those eyes flash with indignation at any tale of injustice or cruelty. She was described by the tall African chief, Khama, as "the little lady with the bright eyes that point to the kind heart". She had the beautiful hands of an artist, with long tapering fingers, white, with the most delicate shell-pink palms. She was so very quiet and still in manner that it was

not until one knew her well that anything of her intensity of feeling could be guessed. This winter she was often dressed in red, a colour much in vogue at that time. She always loved bright colours, and speaks in one letter of the pleasure colour gave her in nature even more than that of form, though she much enjoyed the tracery of the branches of the trees in the winter. A new dress was a great interest to her, and shopping quite a delight, especially when pretty things had to be chosen and bought for other people. If friends wanted her undivided attention in a walk, it was best to beguile her away from the shops, which were very attractive to her!

This winter she was not allowed to write, but she went to lectures and into society, and was frequently on the Parade in a bath-chair.

In October, 1890, Edna Lyall's Christmas story for children was published and dedicated to her Eastbourne nephews and nieces, for whom it was ever her greatest delight to make Christmas a happy time. She and the elder children always had a grand secret from the parents and little ones—some surprise entertainment for the day; weeks beforehand preparations would begin and many afternoons be devoted to most interesting shopping. One December, early in the month, she writes: "To-day I feel more like Christmas, for I went with three of the children on a Christmas shopping expedition—always a most delightful time to my mind".

One year she describes her room after the festival,

when the presents had been raked out from "a real haycock. Can you imagine a whole truss of hay in the sitting-room? Spite of dust-sheets and sweeping the room is still redolent of it, and I write in an atmosphere that would give many people hay fever!"

There was always a Christmas tree as well, and for the few days' merry-making her room was given up to it. Every year there was some fresh idea for concealing and giving the presents, and each one got what he or she wanted if this most generous of aunts only knew what it was.

But it was not only in her home that Edna Lyall spread the true Christmas message of love and goodwill to men. Her natural generosity seemed then to revel in the opportunities that this season gave, and every friend far and near was thought of; she spared no pains in the care of choosing suitable presents, and for days was occupied in doing up and sending off parcels innumerable. Invalids and children were especially considered, and on Christmas Eve she would drive round with her presents and flowers, paying as many visits as possible to those who were kept in the house by winter weather or ill-health. As one of her friends truly says, a whole chapter might be written on her love of Christmas, and others might do well in following her example of consideration and thought for the shopowners and assistants at that busy season, in being beforehand with the necessary shopping and helping as much as possible by carrying back parcels instead of leaving everything to be

sent. One year she wrote a short letter to the local paper urging this small consideration on the public.

In January, 1891, Mr. Bradlaugh died. Edna Lyall was much overcome by the news. To quote from *Max Hereford's Dream* :—

“A new sorrow” filled her “heart . . . that he should have passed from the life of an Agnostic, zealously combating what he deemed superstition and error into that unseen world the very existence of which had seemed to him a mischievous delusion—a vain fancy”; and the thought of “his sorrow for past misunderstandings and errors” troubled her. Comfort came to her in the remembrance that she still could be a worker by intercession “with One whose ‘tender mercy’ is ‘for ever and ever’.” With intense sympathy for his daughter she at once wrote to her, and for twelve years—until her own death—on each anniversary of the day, sent Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner a box of violets and lilies of the valley, sheathed in their broad pale green leaves; these, being her father’s Northampton colours, conveyed their message of sympathy to her on her day of mourning. Three weeks later she wrote as follows to Mrs. Bonner :—

“Since writing to you three weeks ago I have read what you wrote in the *National Reformer* for 8th and 15th February. It came as a most painful revelation to me that to the very end Mr. Bradlaugh was overworking himself in order to meet the expenses of the Parliamentary struggle. I remember hearing some years ago that a fund was being raised, but having

subscribed three times to the Election Fund I allowed myself to be persuaded that I had 'done enough' (how wretched that sounds now!), and later on when I made some inquiries I was assured that all his difficulties were at an end. I hardly like to trouble you with a letter, because I can guess how terribly overstrained and tired you must be, and I do not quite know how you regard those who hold views opposed to your own. But I long to send you some practical proof of the deep respect which I have always felt and shall always feel for Mr. Bradlaugh. Will you use the enclosed cheque? I cannot well send it to the proposed Freethought Hall which I saw mentioned in yesterday's *Daily News* any more than you could conscientiously subscribe to a church—but perhaps there may still be some personal expenses for which it might be used, or you might not mind letting it be the means of giving you rest and change of scene. It would give me the greatest pleasure if you would not mind letting it be of service to you in this way. . . . If in any way I could be of the least use to you please let me know. I am afraid to try to put into written words how much I sympathise with you."

In replying to Mrs. Bonner's answer to this, Edna Lyall writes a few days later: "I am so very glad there is this way in which the money can be of service to you, and you are quite free to quote any words of mine. It is grievous to think that any people can have so little respect for your sorrow, and so little right feeling towards the dead as to start afresh the

calumnies you speak of. One finds it hard not to let indignation overpower the love of humanity as far as these bigots and slanderers are concerned. What the struggle must be for you, who have had so much to bear from them, I can't conceive. But I thank you with all my heart for understanding that there are many of us who hate all injustice and who most truly grieve now. Those who slander Mr. Bradlaugh can surely never have met him—or else they must have been strangely blind. That any one who had really talked with him should doubt his integrity seems to me incomprehensible. From such study of his life and writings as I had been able to make, I was prepared to find him strong and altogether honourable, but I confess that on meeting him his extreme gentleness and considerateness came to me as a surprise. Now that I am eight years older and have had a little more experience of the hardness of life, it strikes me still more as being most wonderful that at such a time—in the height of the Parliamentary struggle—what chiefly impressed me should have been his quiet serenity and his kindly patience. It was *very* good of you to write—and please do not think that this letter needs any reply; remember only that I trust to you to let me know if at any time or in any way I can serve you."

Portions of these letters, quoted in the *National Reformer*, were reported to the world at large, and did not escape comment—not always kindly. People little guessed what it cost such an exceedingly sensitive,

reserved nature to be thus discussed in the papers. To a friend at this time she writes :—

“Just one line to say how greatly you cheered me yesterday. I am much too apt to forget ‘the joy’ that is ‘set before’ us when we try in our stumbling fashion to live the life of the Crucified. The loss seems at the time so real and unduly large, and the gain to others so trifling and almost problematical. But your words about the comfort to Mrs. Bonner toughened my foolishly thin skin, and I went to bed gloriously happy at the thought that it really might perhaps give her some slight comfort to be able to keep those things of her father’s; and now I shall fall back on my favourite old motto—‘They say. *Let them say!*’ To-day I’ve had three nice letters from men who had seen the letter—all working-men, in the wide sense. One of them had been a Secularist—Secretary of one of the N.S.S. Branches—and had known Mr. Bradlaugh for thirty years and endorsed every word I said of him. Some years ago he became a Christian, but that was not allowed to alter their mutual respect for each other. He adds: ‘Mr. Bradlaugh could respect a sincere believer . . . he was a generous, sincere, kind-hearted, noble man. He was the subject of many slanders, but he lived them down and outlived them all.’”

There is another letter, written in March, referring to the Secularist question.

“I can’t tell you what a comfort it is to be felt with on this subject; sometimes it is rather lonely—tho’,



of course, many think kindly of Secularists, and many true and kind words have been written lately about Mr. Bradlaugh. But many are so bitter and misunderstand so grievously, and others are just utterly indifferent, and others quite silent. So that your loving and understanding words cheered me much. You mustn't think I, personally, have much to bear. I am by nature a coward, and it is a sort of agony to me always to come before the public in any way, if one can see the least probability of paining one's friends or being blamed oneself. I suppose that is why my vocation has been to write books like *Donovan* and *We Two*, and so be always on the unpopular side! Good training to cure one of a detestable weakness. . . . I saw this motto the other day; very likely you know it— isn't it good?

Look forward, not back.

Look out, not in.

Look up, not down.

Lend a hand.

"Mrs. Bonner says her great consolation now is to let it be seen in how great honour her father was held by 'all sorts and conditions of people,' and that is why she asked leave to quote my letter. The thought of giving her even a minute's comfort is enough to make up for any slight pain, and the best part of cowardly pain is that it is soon over."

In April, Edna Lyall went to the Italian Lakes with a great friend who had helped to nurse her. Writing just before they started, she said:—

"I am *much* stronger, and I hope the change will quite set me up again. Life seems rather a drive, and what with shopping, dentists, publishers, visitors and children, I don't seem able to write you a real letter, but this will at least bring you my love and Easter greeting."

Unfortunately, on arriving at Locarno, she was laid up with an attack of shingles, but wrote home very cheerfully saying they had met such nice people, were having a most enjoyable time, and hoped to be back in Eastbourne at the end of May. The thought of the unseen life was very present with her at this time, and she and her friend read Dean Plumptre's book, *The Spirits in Prison*, together, and talked of the subject of *Max Hereford's Dream*, which was written on her return to England and dedicated to her travelling companion. She came home certainly much stronger, and began writing again in June, but was obliged by the doctor's orders to shorten the hours of work and live a much restricted life.

She writes of this to a friend :—

"I hope your headaches do not mean that you are writing too hard ; perhaps you ought to adopt my most unpleasant *régime* of a daily constitutional from twelve to one—exactly the hour that seems to break into and spoil the whole morning."

In July she first met Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, and from this time a correspondence was kept up between them, and the friendship became a great mutual enjoyment.

This summer Edna Lyall travelled about paying visits to friends and relations. From Caterham, in July, she writes joyfully that her doctor uncle from Brighton pronounces her perfectly well, but that now she must take life quietly, sleep much and never get over-tired, or a breakdown might come from which she probably would not have such a complete recovery. "I feel very cheerful!" she says, in conclusion.

From Caterham she and a cousin made an excursion to the Chiltern Hills, and thoroughly studied the country connected with John Hampden, the patriot, who was to be one of the characters in her next story, *To Right the Wrong*. Referring to this, she says:—

"We began with lunch at Hampden House, which I had rather dreaded, as it is always a great effort to me to meet strangers. However, Lord and Lady Buckinghamshire proved to be not at all formidable, but very kind and simple and hospitable. They took us all about the old house and showed us the room where Hampden was arrested for refusing to pay the ship-money." After describing their visit to Watlington, where they slept in the house where Hampden is said to have slept before Chalgrove, their drive to Chalgrove Field, Pyton Church and Thane, she concludes by saying: "It is beautiful to see how a good man's memory lives, and how much more a hero like Hampden influences the world than many other men who had longer and more successful careers".

In August, Edna Lyall went with the rest of the family to Ilkley, and much enjoyed the lovely country

although it was rather a wet summer. The holidays spent in the country "all together" were always a great delight to her, though her correspondence even then was overwhelming, and she writes to a friend :—

"Dear! how I do want a good talk with you instead of this tiresome scribble. There will certainly be no letters in the next world! Joyful thought!"

In all her letters she refers to books which she is reading, and before one of the holiday times writes to a friend :—

"We are all hard at work packing, and the Wordsworth—which I do value so much as your gift, and for its association with dear Miss F.—is in the book-box. The book-box, I must tell you, is an old square oak box which belonged to my grandfather, and as long as I can remember has always been filled with summer holiday books when we went from home."

Writing from Ilkley she speaks of Mrs. Oliphant's *Kirsteen*, *For the Right*, *Mademoiselle Ixe*, and *Archbishop Tait's Life*. Of the last she says: "What a grand, wide-minded man he was! I wish there were more like him." And again: "I know it is assumed often that Liberal Christians don't genuinely care so deeply as, say, extreme Evangelicals, or extreme High Churchmen, but surely the lives of men like Frederick Maurice, Kingsley and Archbishop Tait prove that notion to be unjust".

From Yorkshire, Edna Lyall went to Bangor to stay with Mrs. Mary Davies, and wrote from there to Mrs. Bonner :—

“ I am having a feast of music here, but am doubtful whether it is a greater treat to hear Mrs. Davies sing or talk. I am so glad you know her and like her so much as a singer—that will be a bond between us. I quite agree, too, in what you say about Santley—he was the first really good singer I ever heard, and is associated with all sorts of happy times in the past. Yesterday, the day being glorious, we crossed to Anglesea and saw Beaumaris Castle, a most beautiful old ruin. We scrambled about into most break-neck places and had great fun. I quite long to be able to bring the castle into my next novel, but fear my hero's general never went near it! Bangor is, as Mrs. Davies says, ‘a hot-bed of education,’ and as her husband is connected with the University College here, we are in the thick of it. It is an interesting bit of life and intensely Welsh. I am trying to learn a little about the original Arthurian legends, which form a huge book with an unpronounceable name that I daren't try to write! . . . I am making use of my returned health to pay a long round of visits to see as many friends and relations as possible.”

Miss Bayly returned home in September, but the next month went up to Yorkshire to stay with Bishop Walsham How, and from there wrote to Mrs. Bonner:—

“ I am spending a few days with the Bishop of Wakefield (Dr. Walsham How). He is such a delightful man, and the Yorkshire colliers and factory hands seem to love him as much as some of the East London people did. Just at present, while his house in

Wakefield is being built, he is living six miles off in the country, which is very inconvenient for the work—especially in the winter, and the cold here is intense; even now it is bad enough. The country would be pretty, but it is all spoilt with dye-works and soap-works and smoky chimneys. Still it is rather nice to be in the midst of so much work. . . . I do hope some day you may get to know Bishop Walsham How. I have a feeling you would very much like him.”

There is an interesting piece on presentiment written to Mrs. Bonner about this time.

“I know well that horrible ‘feeling of impending calamity’ which you speak of, and after the long series of sorrows you have had to bear, it is surely a natural result. ‘The burnt child dreads the fire.’ Personally, I do not believe a bit in forebodings—mine never come true! I have had many troubles and losses, but all have been unexpected and more or less sudden. Still, that sort of depression is very hard to struggle against. There is a quaint bit in one of George Herbert’s poems which has often helped me—

Either grief will not come; or it must.  
Do not forecast,  
And while it cometh, it is almost past.

I will not finish the verse for it would very likely only jar upon you, and you are always so careful to avoid hurting me, that I want to be equally careful. But sometimes it almost breaks my heart to think that you are without the hope and the comfort which has

been everything to me. I think, though, that we are probably at one in admitting that good is generally gained through pain and suffering. Do you remember once telling me how it was at the time when you were missing your sister specially and longing for her letters, that your father took to writing to you every day when you were separated? Is it not at least *possible* that this new sorrow and loss may open up fresh and undreamt-of joys?"

Replying to Mrs. Bonner's answer to this, she says :—

"Your last letter was such a pleasure, and helped me, I think, to understand and know you better. I quite agree with what you said about the harm that is sometimes the result of pain. But then joy may also make one narrow and selfish. I suppose the truth is that both are meant to develop our love, but that we may let either of them help or hinder. Perhaps I am wrong in what I said as to speculating on possibilities with regard to the future, and yet it seems to me that 'we search for Truth' and 'Thorough,' and 'I labour, I hope,' and all the mottoes you choose, open a way to something beyond just what we actually see. And I cannot help being surprised that you do not wonder whether those months of complete happiness were not just a foretaste of a happiness that is, from its very nature, lasting. I don't understand how, having had this foretaste, you can yet be 'entirely satisfied with the years between birth and death'."

## CHAPTER VIII.

POLITICS—1892, 1893.

Influenza—Politics—Mrs. Besant—Women's Liberal Federation—  
Election—Mrs. L. B. Walford—Miss Agnes Giberne—The Lakes  
—*Doreen*—Young Authors—Autograph collectors—Ireland—The  
Ladies' Gallery—Carriage accident—Change of publishers—Miss  
Rowland-Grey.



## CHAPTER VIII.

POLITICS—1892, 1893.

“Some one must go first in every reform.”

“Are we then only to give what will cost us nothing?”—*Doreen*.

THE early days of the year 1892 will long be remembered in England as the time of one of the most serious outbreaks of influenza. Whole households were down with it and many succumbed altogether. Edna Lyall and her family did not escape. She wrote to a friend who was ill at this time :—

“Do take care of yourself. The great thing is to stay in bed and to stuff!! ‘Be long sick that you may be soon hale!’ . . . It is a most grizzly and curious illness. I never felt more miserable and depressed than yesterday, though of course nothing like so ill as in former times.”

As soon as she was able she went on with her book, *To Right the Wrong*, and says to a friend :—

“I am just writing the death of John Hampden—depressing work. I shall be glad when I am through with it and can land him in Paradise again. So few of his words are recorded, and one feels so presumptuous to invent many for him that I have some doubts if I

shall make him as living as Algernon Sydney, which is hard as I admire him even more."

And again :—

"It is a good thing that I have been somewhat hindered in writing my novel lately, as I have just come across some one who has proved the accounts of John Hampden's last words quoted in all the lives of him to be based on a fraudulent pamphlet. In some ways one is sorry that no true version exists, but his so-called dying prayer always sounded to me unnatural. I don't think a dying man speaks *glibly* either to God or to the people he is going to leave. The newspapers in those days seem to have been just as bad as the ones now. On the very day of Hampden's death the Royalist paper, the *Mercurius Aulicus*, published an abominable article on him, and even then said hateful things about his children."

But it was not only in the history of the past that Edna Lyall took such deep interest, she was in the highest sense of the word a patriot and a lover of true patriots who care most for the moral greatness of the country. From very early years the history of our own times had appealed to her. She remembered the election at Brighton when Mr. Fawcett was returned, and in *In the Golden Days* says :—

"It is a wonderful time for all of us when we first begin to take keen interest in matters outside our own small circle, when having been duly crammed and unduly disgusted with history in our schooldays, we wake up one happy morning to find that there

is a living history which can be daily and hourly studied—a history in which we all have our share, our infinitesimal yet priceless share, of influence and responsibility.”

She urged in the *Knight Errant* the principle that no one can be a true patriot who does not begin with loyalty to family and home, nor indeed one whose interest does not extend beyond family and home and country. By education and conviction she was a Liberal ; her father had been one of the earliest members of the Reform Club. She was a devoted admirer of Mr. Gladstone, whose definition of Liberalism she used to quote : “ The principle of Liberalism is *trust in the people* qualified by prudence,” and very strongly did she feel that women have their share in the responsibility and welfare of their country, one indeed from which they have no right to shrink from lazy indifference or conventionality, and she used to say that the homes of the Liberal women that she had come across were the happiest and best cared for in the land. It was a curious coincidence that this year when her chosen motto was “ *Pro Christo et patria*,” was the very one in which a branch of “ The Women’s Liberal Association ” was started in Eastbourne. Mrs. Morgan Brown came from town to set things going, and Edna Lyall was appointed one of the secretaries, but writes to Mrs. Bonner :—

“ I have a nice co-worker who does everything, my doctor flatly refusing to let me try it, and indeed there is not time, for already I can’t get through my own

work. It is the first committee I ever had to do with. What terrible things they are! So long and full of red-tape and petty haggings. I hope the Association may work well, though, and be some use at the election. We have a Mrs. Morgan Brown coming to speak for us on the 21st; she seems very nice and sensible, not at all the unwomanly type of agitator."

A month later she again writes to the same friend:—

"I was very much interested in what you told me of your views as to the Salvation Army question. The band is indeed a great nuisance, but the whole question seems to me much like that of persecution under the Blasphemy Laws. I wish the latter to be repealed, and I wish our special Eastbourne clause to be repealed. The feeling here is most bitter, and I am much afraid it may affect the election, though Captain Brand tries to steer clear of the vexed question which I hope will be settled before the dissolution. . . . This letter is very disjointed I fear, but M.—my five-year-old nephew—is sitting with me, holding a grand review of tin soldiers and I have to review them every two or three minutes! Has the tin soldier mania begun yet with your little boy? I [went] to hear Mrs. Besant. . . . I rather wished it had been on some political question rather than on Theosophy, but I was very much interested, and thought her quite the most powerful woman speaker I had ever heard. There was much that seemed to me most beautiful in what she said as to the gradual growth of character and as to unconscious influence—

but then all that is not specially characteristic of Theosophy. The great want in all theories of 'universal brotherhood,' such as she described, seems to me that such a brotherhood can only be a phrase, not an actual living fact, unless there be a Universal Father. But there we come to the point on which you and I differ, so I will say no more."

This spring Miss Bayly writes of the longest walk she had yet had since her illness, over the downs with the children, but says :—

"I was not too tired. It did all look so lovely. There were a lot of rooks foraging on the turf, and we got the oddest effect of sunlight on their shiny backs—the gloss on them shone so brightly that black seemed literally turned to white—which I took as a parable and felt better."

Just at this time she writes of gardens :—

"How is your garden getting on? I am so glad you have one, for certainly we have found our tiny piece here a great delight. Yesterday I was extravagant enough to buy the adjoining plot of ground. The owner threatened to build on it, and it would have spoilt this house very much. We mean to make a tennis lawn, and there is already one nice border with a rose tree or two and a huge bush of lavender which we have long coveted from the other side of the wall! Now my chief ambition is to pick up an old sundial somewhere for the pleasure of having engraved on it that pretty old motto, 'I mark only the sunny hours'. I had a most tempting catalogue of plants to-day.

But we have none of us the knack of making flowers grow well ; it seems to be born in some people. That point is rather well brought out in some most humorous American stories we have just been reading, called *Seven Dreamers*. I think they would amuse you. There is a charming one called 'Fishing Jimmy'. By-the-bye, did you like or dislike *Cecelia de Noel*? People generally do either one or the other. I liked it very much, though it doesn't seem to me so perfect a work of art as *Mdle. Ixe*. That is to my mind the cleverest short story that has been published for years."

Of books again she says :—

"As to George Meredith's books, you exactly expressed what I always feel about them. Just because they are so grand they are overpowering, and for relaxation one goes to something lighter. His writing always reminds me of Wagner's music. Did you read that clever Dutch story, *The Sin of Joost Aveling*? I think that it is wonderfully good, and it seems all the more striking when you realise it was written in English by a foreigner."

After a few weeks' rest and refreshment in Devonshire, Edna Lyall went up to town as one of the Eastbourne delegates at the Annual Council Meeting of the Women's Liberal Federation. She described afterwards the awfulness of having to stand up almost alone in that large congress of eight or nine hundred women to oppose a motion with which she could not agree, but which was carried against only

two or three opponents. She speaks of the Federation Meeting in the following letter to a nephew at Oxford.

“Coming home last night from seeing ‘Peril’ at the Haymarket, I found your nice ghostly letter awaiting me, and read it in my room between twelve and one, when your descriptions of the old house and your half-concealed, half-revealed tale of the haunted room and the doomed heir thrilled me! What an interesting place Littlecote must be, and you described it so graphically that I almost seem to have been over it with you! I must certainly mention that ‘drinking bottle’ of Cromwell’s. He appears twice in my next novel, but I haven’t dared to have much of him—he is too big for my canvas.

“Have you seen a most fascinating book lately published, *Memoirs of the Verney Family in the Civil War*? It is based on a collection of letters of the time, and they are given with their original and most phonetic spelling. There is a trifle too much editorial ‘setting,’ but the letters are priceless jewels, and give one a delightful glimpse of home life in the seventeenth century. All this time I have never told you how delighted I was to hear of your success at Oxford. A congratulatory letter was written to you—in spirit—ages ago, but somehow it never took form. It was crowded out by a host of other letters which would not wait. We have been rather more busy than usual at Eastbourne with a Women’s Liberal Association! I went up as delegate to the Federation last month, and have at last become

a convert to women speakers. Lady Aberdeen is a first-rate speaker, and so were many others. There is likely to be a very hard fight at Eastbourne, and we are afraid the Liberal candidate—Captain Brand—is not very likely to get in. You would be amused if you could see us working away at his Committee rooms—chiefly at envelope directing—most weary work by which I am thankful we don't have to earn a living! I am just going to stay with Mrs. Walford the author—can't you imagine how we shall talk shop!"

She had been introduced to her by a mutual friend, Miss Agnes Giberne, who lived in Eastbourne.

From Cranbrooke Hall she writes to a friend:—

"I have had a delightful time and am much enjoying this little bit of country house life. The Walfords are charming and there are some nice people staying in the house. One, Miss C., I specially like. She has the room next to mine, and we took to talking through the door that divides us the first night, which in this ghostly old place seemed cheery and comfortable! A lady interviewer is just going to do both of us! Ugh! Detestable. . . . There is a big garden party on Saturday, and I fear I can't get back till 10.5."

In July, Miss Bayly enjoyed a short visit from Mrs. Bonner, and writes after to her:—

"I am so glad you liked being with us; we liked having you very much and hope you will come again. The children still talk about you. . . . I thought



it very sweet of you to search for titles for me.<sup>1</sup> I liked one or two of them decidedly, and the one about 'Conscience' would have fitted in well with the motto from Milton's paper on Church Government which I had put on the title-page. On the strength of this I had one more try on both publishers, but found them so firmly convinced that 'A Hero in the Strife' was the most attractive and 'selling' title that I have sacrificed my wishes to others. Of course they have much more experience, and I don't think a title is of such extreme importance after all. The book is at last done, and on the whole I am glad, though I miss it and the constant reading up for it. It has been on hand actually since December, 1888. All the spring of '89 I was gradually failing, and from April '89 to June '91 was unable to touch it. No one who has yet read it has found out the place where the break of two years came in the middle of a chapter! But I can't yet judge how far the book is affected by the conditions under which it was written. One seems to have lived through a lifetime since beginning it, for so much has happened. We had a sad disappointment at Eastbourne about the Election, as you will have seen. Still I hope next time Captain Brand will get in, for he reduced the Conservative majority by 1,000. There was such a good meeting on the night before the polling day and Sir William Harcourt spoke wonderfully well. I had not ex-

<sup>1</sup> For the volume afterwards published as *To Right the Wrong*.

pected to like him, for he generally seems to me so sarcastic, but he is far better to hear than to read, for he says everything in such a quietly humorous way."

Just before starting for the Lakes, where the family spent the month of August, she says to another friend:—

"Jocelyn is finished and my holiday begun, and I am trying to console myself with a history of Ireland—*reading* it, I mean. I am going to rest and be thankful and enjoy Ulleswater."

The selection of a title for this story was a great difficulty; it was usual for the author to send a list of possible titles to the publishers. "The Serving of Jocelyn," her first choice, was rejected by them and "A Hero in the Strife" chosen, for which she did not at all care. It was thus announced in the newspapers, when to her great joy a letter was received from the Stationers' Hall saying that that title was already taken and a book just issued under it by the Religious Tract Society. She then wished the name to be "The Requital," but "To Right the Wrong" was selected in preference by the publishers, which had been suggested to her by a line from *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, and though she did not personally care for it, it was passable and suited the plot, and so was decided upon.

The uninitiated would not believe the difficulty of this comparatively small item in the writing world. Nothing that has been used before can be repeated, and, as a librarian knows, a "taking title" makes a considerable difference to the general public.

From Patterdale there are many interesting letters to various friends. One describes the journey there.

“We left home last Friday and fared very well on the whole, as the day was cool. The children were really very good, but it was a long day for them, getting up at a quarter to six and not getting to Patterdale till nine at night, as, unluckily, the London train was late and we missed the early one at Penrith. Then when we got to Troutbeck it was pouring with rain, and the carriages ordered proved to be a large open brake and the tiniest of covered waggonettes. Into this last one of the nurses, the four youngest children, and the rheumatic ‘Edna Lyall’ were packed, while the others had a very cold and wet time in the brake. It was a two-hours’ drive, and what with nursing E. all the way and trying to keep up M.’s failing spirits with ‘The House that Jack Built,’ and endeavouring to keep poor J. from rolling off the very high narrow seat while we plunged down the most appalling hills, the way seemed long indeed. It was delightful to hand out the poor, tired, little bundles at Goldrill House, and to stumble into a cosy room with a blazing fire and supper all ready for us. . . . You would be happy with these lovely mountains all round about. From one window we look across lovely green meadows with the Goldrill beck winding through them to Helvellyn, and at the back, quite close to us, there are delightful mountains with little clumps of trees here and there, and great rugged grey boulders. Ulles-

water is about ten minutes' walk, and to-morrow we hope for some boating. I don't think I ever saw anything more lovely than the moon rising last night. . . . We are having a thoroughly lazy time, and have brought a whole boxful of novels to read, with just a sprinkling of sober literature. I am rather thinking of having an Irish heroine for my next story, and have brought Miss Lawless' *History of Ireland* and Justin M'Carthy's *Ireland Since the Union* by way of preparation. The scene will have to be chiefly in England, though, I fancy."

To another friend she writes :—

"I can't do much climbing, but can walk four or five miles nicely, and much enjoy the lake. The children are beginning to row easily, but we take a boatman with us, for like most mountain lakes it is rather dangerous, they say—the storms come on so suddenly. Last Friday we had a delightful day at Grasmere, and saw some of the houses where Wordsworth had lived, and his grave. We were delighted with the whole excursion. The view from the seat called 'Rest and be Thankful' is specially lovely. Rydal Water, too, is most beautiful. Ambleside is rather too much of a town quite to please me."

When these delightful weeks of rest were over, Edna Lyall, as usual, paid a few visits to friends and relations before returning home in the middle of October to settle down for the winter and write *Doreen*.

There is one point in this author's character upon which several of her colleagues have remarked with

gratitude, *i.e.*, her very generous readiness to welcome and encourage other writers in the literary world. She was always ready to give a helping hand to beginners, remembering her own experience and the difficulty of getting known. One such having read her books wrote to her for advice, and was much struck with her readiness and evident wish to do what she could for a perfect stranger, answering the letter thus :—

“It is a great pleasure to me to know that my books have pleased you, and I thank you for your kind words about them. Every writer has to make a hard struggle at first, and mine was a very weary one. There is nothing for it but resolute patience. The Society of Authors was not, I think, in existence, or at any rate not much known, when I began, but I should certainly advise you to submit your MS. to them, for their advice is certain to be useful.”

Then followed technical details, and she concluded by offering at any time to give letters of introduction to good and trustworthy publishers, and with an expression of sympathy with the young author's sense of discouragement, consoling her with the thought that probably her MS. was never read, as such hundreds and hundreds are sent in that it becomes impossible even to glance at them. A little while after she wrote again giving a good deal of advice which must have meant time and thought and trouble to her, saying :—

“Do not be persuaded to pay for publication : it is a great risk.”

Another letter of this date written on a letter-card, in answer to a juvenile collector, will amuse autograph hunters:—

“6 COLLEGE ROAD, EASTBOURNE,

“21st November, 1892.

“SIR,

“I am not very fond of autograph collectors, but I am very fond of small boys, and have several nephews each with a mania for collecting something. So I send you some lines by Matthew Browne, which pleased me very much, and which I hope you will like.

And I thought to myself  
How nice it is  
For me to live  
In a world like this,  
Where things can happen,  
And clocks can strike,  
And none of the people  
Are made alike,  
Where Love wants this,  
And Pain wants that,  
And all our hearts  
Want tit-for-tat,  
In the jumble we make  
With our heads and hands,  
In a world which  
Nobody understands,  
But with work and hope  
And the right to call  
Upon Him who sees it  
And knows us all.

“Believe me, yours sincerely,

“A. E. BAYLY,

“‘Edna Lyall’.

“Master S. M. ELLIS.”

In later years autograph collectors became so numerous and importunate that she thought it as well to tax them, and in complying with their request asked for a shilling towards her cousin Miss Agnes Weston's work among the "bluejackets," in which she was much interested.

This winter Miss Bayly worked steadily on at her Irish story, but only writing in the morning, and often refreshing herself with a visit to the theatre, her favourite recreation, though she considered it also the duty of all theatre-goers to support good pieces and encourage the actors. *Doreen* grew by degrees, but was hindered by bad colds and autumn visitors, and a mild sort of influenza went through the household. When the first few chapters were written she felt it a great relief, saying they were always the most difficult to her mind.

In the meanwhile illustrations for *To Right the Wrong*, which was to come out the following January in *Good Words*, were being sent for her approval by Mr. Gordon Browne, with which she was delighted, and the year 1892 closed with the usual happy business of Christmas and Christmas holidays.

In March, 1893, in reply to a letter from Mr. Finlayson, telling of the death of his father, Dr. A. Campbell Finlayson, with whom some years ago she had had some correspondence, Edna Lyall writes with much sympathy :—

"Is it not most wonderful to think how such as he must enjoy the meeting in the Unseen with all the

hosts of fellow-workers gone before. I always like that bit in Baxter's *Saints' Rest* where he looks forward to meeting John Hampden."

In the spring she went to Ireland with two friends. She was feeling tired from the warm and lovely but trying weather, and says just before she starts :—

"I am very well but rather longing for a rest, and I fancy the book will go better after I have been to Ireland."

Armed with many introductions to Irish friends in the political and literary world from Mr. Justin M'Carthy and others, she arrived, with the present writer and another friend, in "dear dirty Dublin" one day in the beginning of a lovely May.

Many of the places we visited and the amusing sayings and incidents which we came across are told in the account of Doreen's visit to Ireland in company with her betrothed, Max Hereford, and his mother. The drive to the Gap of Dunloe, where they were met by a cavalcade which trotted along by the side of the car, shouting and gesticulating, each man urging the claims of his own steed—such an absurd scene that the occupants of the car laughed till they cried—was one of our experiences ; as was also the arrival at Glendalough when a funeral was taking place, and the waiter quaintly remarked, "People come here from all parts of the country to be buried". There we chose and photographed the spot where the carriage accident should happen and Mrs. Hereford be killed. Indeed all through this tour we so realised



and talked of the career of Doreen that the most matter-of-fact member of the party would turn to the other two and say, "Are you talking of real people or only of those fiction folk?" But the "fiction folk" were very real to the author, and she constantly spoke of Donovan as still living and going on with his life of usefulness; and it was her custom to introduce characters from the former stories into the current novel as the "supers," about whom generally little can be known. She found an opportunity to talk with some turf-cutters and also with the poor evicted family whose miserable shanty by the roadside we passed in one of our drives, and "a sort of fury of pity filled her heart; the sight of the little wan children made her eyes fill with tears. She remembered with a shudder that this eviction case was only one of a thousand," and she too emptied her purse in that forlorn shanty, and was filled with indignation and wroth at the sight of the misery and distress which could only cease when, as she believed, "injustice itself must be removed, and Ireland self-governed and self-respecting must work out her own salvation".

Miss Bayly was the most delightful travelling companion; she enjoyed to the full lovely scenery and meeting and studying fresh characters. She wove many a romance round the people we came across, and had the rare gift of helping them to be their best in her presence. She possessed what Baring-Gould calls the "divining-rod" for finding goodness in her fellows; with her one felt at one's

best and ashamed of anything small or petty. She was so anxious to understand people, to love and serve them, it quite distressed her if she could not find a meeting point. To illustrate this may be given an extract from a letter which she wrote once from abroad.

“There is a child in this hotel who makes us all quite unhappy. He is only four and a nice friendly little fellow. But he has a weak mother and a bullying father and they are just ruining him, alternately petting and beating the poor mite—letting him sit up to late *table d’hôte* and talking all their horrid fast sort of talk before him. They are not bad people, but just of the racing, gambling set. We take turns in sitting next them at meals, for it is rather depressing, and on the other side there are some rather nice people who talk well. It is a great puzzle to know how to get into touch with people like that. I generally end in sitting by quite silently, and fear that may seem Pharisaic ; but it can’t be one’s place to argue, and the only point of interest we might have in common is the child. One gets some very strange glimpses of character in hotel life abroad, and on the whole travelling seems to develop people’s failings, so that I have to follow your plan and dwell with all my might on the goodness and the genuine kindness that one comes across.”

She often spoke of these people, and dwelt with satisfaction on the thought that one day when the “weak mother” had a bad headache the “bullying

father" had shown great consideration and gentleness, so that she was sure he was better than he seemed.

On returning from Ireland, Edna Lyall wrote to a cousin, who was a strong Unionist, in reference to having missed friends in Cork on account of her only spending one hurried day there.

"We took Wicklow (or rather Glendalough) instead, and there met a perfectly delightful Mrs. Barton, of Glendalough House, who did her very best to make a Unionist of me, also a nice clergyman who took us for some lovely expeditions among the mountains and to Loch Dan, where a very kind lady rowed us across in a somewhat leaky boat and gave us some delicious milk, for which we were truly grateful as the heat was intense. Indeed we were so grateful that not all her diatribe against Mr. Gladstone could make us think her anything but a good angel! We stayed at St. Anne's Hill for two nights, and there met a clergyman's wife from Queenstown who said she knew you. She, too, was a strong opponent of Home Rule. In fact every one there was except old Mr. Barter, the sculptor, who had known both O'Connell and Smith O'Brien. In Cork we had only a few hours, and though we had introductions from four or five people, had to give them all up as Denny Lane monopolised the whole day and insisted on lionising us. He is a dear old man and much more like a poet than a politician. He took us over the Christian Brothers' School—quite the best arranged I ever saw, and also showed us the harbour. How exquisite it is! In

Dublin we only had a day or two both going and returning, and it was much taken up as the Jamesons have some very hospitable friends (anti-Home Rulers) there, and F. J. is also living there. Then I had sundry introductions from Justin M'Carthy and others to various political people of all shades of opinion. But honestly I did not neglect your side of the question. Only while writing this evening I have had a call from the Liberal agent here, and he tells me of a strong Unionist living near here who went over to Ireland to study the question more and came back a confirmed Home Ruler. Apparently it was partly the bigotry of the Belfast people that turned him. I am afraid like the two knights and the shield we never could agree politically, but I hope nevertheless you will believe I am always glad to read on both sides of the question, and that you will not count me an enemy but reckon me always your affectionate cousin," etc., etc.

To another friend she writes :—

"We so often wished you had been with us in Ireland. The people are delightful, and we had opportunities of meeting people of all sorts and conditions, and of every variety of opinion. Both Miss E. and I have become more than ever convinced that Home Rule is the only chance for the country. The Unionists out there were very kind to us, but ended by being convinced that as converts we were 'past praying for'. . . . Think of me in the Ladies' Gallery on Thursday next! I do hope Mr. Gladstone will speak."

That he did so will be seen by the following extract from another letter :—

“ We heard Mr. Gladstone twice, and he is *grand* ! He looks such a saint, too. It does one good only to think of him and of the sweet way in which Mrs. Gladstone looked down and listened to him. She was sitting next us and talked to us a little.”

The summer of 1893 was oppressively hot, but Miss Bayly did not go far from home this year. In June she stayed with her sister and the children in a farmhouse at Hailsham, but was hard at work, and says :—

“ This morning I wrote *Doreen* in a delightful orchard close to the house with my inkstand in the fork of an apple tree, and ducks and chickens and seven delicious little calves straying about. One calf got quite friendly and came and smelt my ink ! It reminds me very much of the Sussex farm at which we used to spend our holidays as children, and it seems very natural to have our dear old nurse running in and out to see us. She is only about three-quarters of a mile away.”

In August she spent a few days in London, and, anxious as ever to verify every detail of her story, she went one day to prowl about Bloomsbury, where her heroine was to live with an uncle and aunt. As it was too hot to walk she took a hansom, and thought her “ old timer ” must have imagined her to be a lunatic or a female detective, as when he asked what number in Bernard Street, was only told to drive

slowly up and down ! Edna Lyall always welcomed experiences for her books, and it was in this way that she turned to account many of the ills and misadventures of her life, saying once when mumps was going through the house that she hoped to escape, as, for one reason, it was not an illness that could be used afterwards in a book, which consideration might console an author in consumption or any of those interesting maladies wherein novel readers delight ! It was, therefore, as a useful experience that she looked upon a carriage accident which she describes in the following letter written from her brother's rectory at Castle Frome to her aunt at Caterham :—

“On Saturday we spent the day at Hereford, a very interesting old place, but our visit ended disastrously, though fortunately we were none of us hurt. The coachman was driving, I was beside him, and R. and E. were on the back seat of the dog-cart, when the mare shied a *very* little at some tar which was being heated in the road ; she then slipped and went right down on her side. We were all thrown out in different directions, but beyond bruises and slight strains of various muscles are none of us the worse. It was a wonderful escape. Curiously enough, E. had only just been telling me while we had tea at Hereford that the mare had a trick of crossing her feet and had once come down on her knees in consequence, and knowing that that is a fatal habit in horses I had been thinking how I could persuade them to get rid of her ! This accident, however, did not happen from the

crossing of her feet. She slipped just as London omnibus horses often do. They have determined, however, that she had better go before anything worse happens. There really was no time on Saturday to be frightened—it was all like a flash of lightning. There seemed only time for two thoughts—‘We are all going,’ then a crash as the road met my back and head, and then a sort of instinct, ‘Roll over, you are near the horse’. So I rolled, and a working-man rushed forward and picked me up, and R. and E., who had been shot out at different angles, came hurrying round, and we were all amazed and delighted to find that the only thing broken was the glass of R.’s watch. . . . We rested for a few minutes in a little inn close by (it happened just near Hereford Station), then finding that the mare was not at all hurt, and that there was no train for some hours, we made up our minds to get in again, which really did require ‘a moral effort’! It seemed such a long twelve miles, and towards the end we only had starlight; but it was a good training and will keep us from losing our nerve in driving.”

This year with the generous assistance of her friend, Mr. Walford, Edna Lyall changed her publishers, and an agreement was made with Messrs. Longmans to bring out *Doreen* in one volume in the autumn of 1894. Much correspondence passed between them, and Mr. Walford took considerable trouble in endeavouring to procure the best possible arrangements for the author to whom the business part of

her profession was always irksome. She writes to him:—

“Every one is so good about offering to help me, I can’t tell you what a relief it is to have some understanding counsellors. Most of my people are ‘ghostly advisers’ and know nothing of business.

“I think you must wish *Doreen* at Jericho, she has given you so much correspondence.”

She had written some time previously to a friend to whom she was anxious to give pecuniary help that had she taken more trouble in making bargains with publishers she might have been able to be of more use, but owing, among other things, to the lack of this quality, she could not do half what she would like to do. Mr. Walford also helped in making an agreement with the editors of *The Christian World* with regard to *Doreen*. They were anxious to begin publishing the story in their weekly paper towards the end of the year 1893. This Edna Lyall felt would be too hurried, for she said: “It is my habit to correct the MS. very carefully and to alter but little when it is printed. I cannot possibly get far enough away from the work to see its faults properly in so short a time. That is one reason why I should so much have preferred its appearing later on.”

In another letter she avers she cannot possibly allow the story to be begun in the paper until she has finished writing it; but this could not be avoided, and at last it was agreed that it should commence in January, 1894, though she could not complete the



MS. until the following March or April. This caused her a good deal of anxiety and involved overwork and pressure.

Writing to the author, Miss Rowland-Grey, in November, she refers to her hurry over *Doreen* in the postscript, but I quote nearly the whole letter as it is of some interest.

"Thank you so much for your book; it was very kind of you to send it to me, and you know how much I appreciate your writing. *Her One Ambition* is very sad, and I know you will be pleased to hear I cried over it! I shall indeed remember your kind invitation, and should much enjoy meeting you all again some day. I am frantically busy just now, but as the weather is too bad for me to go out it doesn't much matter, and somehow in the autumn one always feels inclined for a good 'grind'. I send you, with many apologies for the delay, the *Autobiography*. Excuse this hurried letter, and with renewed thanks for your story and your kind thought of me," etc., etc.

"P.S.—Your words about *To Right the Wrong* cheer me very much. I was afraid it was much too historical. The fact is, when once you begin really to study those times and to dive into the past, the fascination of the work takes hold of you, and in trying to throw fresh light on what has been so obscured by romantic untruths one is apt to become dry and over-minute. Ten years hence I shall perhaps see how much better the story might have been as regards construction. Forgive my long delay in sending this letter. I am being

dreadfully hurried, as *Doreen* will probably have to come out very quickly in America."

Two Christmas letters may here be quoted, with interesting references to the coming book.

"Your letter was a great pleasure to me and should have been answered long before, but it has been a very busy autumn with us. I am still working hard at *Doreen*, but she is nearly finished, and the first part is already being printed in America and in *The Christian World* here. I do hope that you will not read her in weekly portions! It is a horrid system and quite spoils a novel. . . . I was much surprised and pleased a few days ago to see in a newspaper that Mr. Gladstone's attention had been called by a 'well-known Liberal member' to the appearance of my Irish story, and he wrote some most kind words about it, wishing it success. I am wondering much who the member can have been."

To another friend she writes on the 23rd of December :—

"We are all well and very busy. *Doreen* and the typewriter have retired to the spare room, and I have had to leave poor Max (the hero) almost tearing his hair, pacing his study with great drops of perspiration on his forehead, until next Tuesday! He has just discovered *Doreen's* letter in the safe with the diamonds! and must remain in torture till Boxing Day!"



## CHAPTER IX.

BUSY YEARS—1894-1897.

Switzerland — Lady Verney — Scotland — Ireland — Letter from Mr. Gladstone — Mr. Michael Davitt — Mr. W. O'Brien — Mr. Ben Greet — Mr. A. S. Homewood — *How the Children Raised the Wind* — Armenia — *The Sign of the Cross* — Stratford-on-Avon — *The Autobiography of a Truth* — The Archbishop of York — Canon Rawnsley — *Wayfaring Men* — Women Writers' Dinner — The Burges monument — *The Critic*.

## CHAPTER IX.

BUSY YEARS—1894-1897.

"Surely . . . it is by the fearless right-doing of each man and woman that all good comes."—*Autobiography of a Truth*.

EDNA LYALL was very busy finishing her Irish story and correcting the proofs for the American edition through the opening months of 1894. She consulted Mr. Michael Davitt, who corrected some mistakes in the brogue, and also Mrs. Davies with regard to the musical part of the story. She feared the book might make her many enemies in consequence of the Home Rule element in it, but said as long as it was read as well as abused that must be put up with.

On the change of the Ministry this spring she wrote :—

"Is not this news of Mr. Gladstone's resignation sad? And yet in a way we feel that the opportunity was a good one, and his speech was grand and ought to inspirit the man who is to play Joshua to his Moses."

In March she went for a few weeks' rest to Switzerland with some friends, correcting the last proofs of *Doreen* in the train and posting them off to the publishers from Basle.

Writing home from Vevey she says how lost she is without *Doreen*, and describes a lovely day at Les Avants.

"It was such a perfect day, and the lake was like glass and the snow mountains looked like exquisite clouds—one really could hardly believe that they were mountains. On the way up and down we tried several photographs, but we felt very glad not to be staying at Les Avants as it is deep in snow, and the glare of so much whiteness is very tiring. It felt quite warm in spite of the snow, and at the same moment we saw icicles hanging from the eaves of a chalet and a peacock butterfly flitting past! We had lunch at Les Avants and walked about the grounds, and I photographed Miss E. in one of the funny little sun-boxes where people sit and bask. She could hardly endure the one moment she had to spend in it, the heat was so great."

A letter written from Glion to Mrs. Bonner gives another description of the country and refers to books she is reading.

"It was a great pleasure to have your long letter. I had been longing to hear from you, but quite thought it was probably your work at the *Biography* which accounted for the silence. Letters must wait when one is wrestling with the hardest part of a book. I can fancy how very hard your task must be, but don't feel at all sure that your sense of failure really proves that you are failing. You never could be satisfied yourself with any biography, and I doubt very much if we can any of us form any true idea of our own

work—unless perhaps years after a book is written. I look forward so very much to reading it when it comes out. If only it gives the same sort of insight into the home side of your father's character which you have given me in some of our talks, what a revelation it will be to some outsiders!

“I wish I could have you sitting beside me at this minute on the garden-seat where I am writing—rather shakily writing, I fear—with Miss Thackeray's *Village on the Cliff* by way of desk! The view all round is perfect. Sheer down below lies the Lake of Geneva—exquisitely blue and so glassy-clear that it perfectly reflects the snow mountains opposite in Savoy. To the left towers the Dent du Midi—one great mass of snow. Chillon far beneath us looks like a little toy castle, and behind us are lovely wooded mountains, while to the right are bare-looking brown hills terraced with vineyards and the pretty broken line of coast with Clarens and Vevey in the distance. I want you very badly indeed to enjoy it all with me. Our weather has been all that could be wished, except that the first two days at Vevey were somewhat cold. But the wood fires were very cheerful, and we gained in many ways, as there had been a heavy fall of snow on all the surrounding hills just before we arrived and they looked much more beautiful. This very place on the hillside where we are now living an out-door life and basking in sunshine was under snow when we first came to Switzerland a fortnight ago. . . . I feel rather lost without *Doreen*, but hope to begin another

novel soon. It has been 'brewing' nicely during this lazy time."

After her return home Edna Lyall went to stay with Lady Verney, and writes of her visit:—

"I have just come back from Claydon and have much enjoyed my little visit there. It was so strange to look up and see upon the walls the well-known faces—Sir Ralph and all our Verney memoir friends—and I had quite a feast of the real old letters and also saw some of the MS. of the last volume which is to be published, they hope, next year. Lady Verney is so *charming*. She really wrote a great part of the memoirs as old Lady Verney was too ill to complete them. . . . Mr. Gardiner, the historian, is a delightful man, and it was wonderful to see him reading the most dreadfully written seventeenth century letters as though they had been print. One lady wrote: 'What would it profit my daughters if they gained the hole world and lost their soles'!"

A little later she writes of *Doreen* that it is—

"Fairly launched in America, but does not come out here till November. Michael Davitt has read the American edition for me and his verdict is very cheering—even allowing for his natural generosity and a certain amount of 'blarney'. It is a comfort to have pleased some one, but I am preparing for a rough time over here, and am not at all sure that it won't have a decidedly bad effect on my reputation as a novelist. However, if it does the least little bit of real work for Ireland, I'll not grudge that."



An instance of Edna Lyall's intense sympathy and thoughtfulness is shown in the following letter to Mrs. Bonner who was working very hard at her father's biography.

"I can't bear to think of your toiling away through this hot weather in spite of your bad headaches. Take all the care of yourself you can and do keep Fisher Unwin waiting a little rather than overwork yourself. There seems so little I can do for you, my dear friend, and I am not going to take up your time with letters. But every now and then I shall send you some flowers for your writing-table, and you will show that you take me for a real 'old friend' by not acknowledging them. When I next see your handwriting on an envelope I shall say to myself, 'This means that the biography is done!'" etc.

Before going up to Scotland, where she spent the holidays with her family, Edna Lyall paid another visit to Lady Verney, and writes of it:—

"I had a nice quiet time at Claydon and am more than ever in love with Lady Verney. They were all so kind. On Sunday evening we all read poems in turn which alarmed me much, but I enjoyed the listening part, and chose the short little song from *Pippa Passes*—

God's in His Heaven,  
All's right with the world—

so that my ordeal was soon over. One of them read the 'Child Musician,' a poem of Austin Dobson's which I had heard of and long wished for."

Her letters from Callander describe a drive through Sir Walter Scott's country "along the scene of the 'Chase' in the *Lady of the Lake* and 'a scramble on Ellen's Isle where Sir Walter imagined her house, for there does not seem to be any level place—at any rate now it is a sort of wild jungle!" Also a drive through the Pass of Leny to Loch Lubnaig, when she chose the place where her next hero should go through "a nice interesting scene"! As usual she mentions the books she is reading—*Beggars All*, a most original story; *Under the Yoke*, the first Bulgarian story translated into English, and many others, among them Dean Stanley's *Life*, of which she says:—

"I have just got the second volume of Dean Stanley's *Life* after waiting for it since March. I see it gives the story about his visit to Mrs. Besant's mother. There is also a charming account of his meeting Mr. Gladstone at some great house and being shown into a room in which 'the two little boy Gladstones, Herbert and Henry,' were alone, in a great state of trepidation because they had just dropped some jam on the edge of the butter-dish. Dean Stanley says, 'I managed to mop it up for them with my handkerchief'! Can't you fancy how the children must have liked him! So few grown-up people seem to understand the dreadful importance of any accident of that sort to children. I so well remember when as children in some drawing-room we were given plums to eat, going through the most dreadful searchings of heart as to what to do with the stones. I'm afraid we stuffed them down

the crack between the back and seat of a sofa surreptitiously !”

A letter to another friend concludes with this serio-comic little rhyme :—

Farewell, dear—  
Forgive this doggerel,  
And write to me soon  
In this Highland toon  
Where shower and sun  
Come to every one  
Like sorrow and mirth  
In our life on earth.  
Things seem in a muddle,  
Yet the rain's but a puddle,  
And the showers are small,  
And the sun a huge ball,  
And sorrows are mending,  
And love is unending.  
So sayeth your friend  
Whose love will ne'er end,

A. E. B.

From Callander Edna Lyall joined Mrs. Mary Davies for a tour in Ireland, and as in one day she purposed travelling through Scotland, England and Wales, crossing from Holyhead to Dublin, she declared she should consider herself a true “Unionist,” having visited all four countries in one day ! From Galway she wrote to the present writer :—

“Is it not odd, when my budget of letters arrived this morning the old head-waiter came up to me and said, ‘Oh, miss, I thought I recognised you last night. Don't you remember me at Glendalough last year ?’ And actually he was the same old fellow I mentioned in *Doreen*. He asked after you and M.”

After her return home she writes of this time :—

“Our visit to Ireland was most interesting. I felt very lazy and disinclined to go, but have seldom enjoyed anything more. I joined Mrs. Mary Davies at Bangor, and we crossed from Holyhead on the calmest day I ever knew. We went first for a few days to County Wicklow and stayed at Bray, making some nice excursions and spending a good deal of time with Mr. and Mrs. Michael Davitt at Ballybrock. They have four dear little children, and it was a great pleasure to get to know them all. He is really a wonderful man, so unselfish and wide-minded. It is wonderful that after all he has suffered he should be so free from bitterness. He looks very ill, but, like most Irishmen, seems to be carried through everything by his unquenchable humour and spirit. We paid an interesting visit to the Irish antiquities in Dublin which I missed last year, and then went down to Galway, drove through Connemara and spent two delightful days in County Mayo with Mr. and Mrs. William O'Brien. There we saw a good deal of the distress, and had an expedition to a most out-of-the-way place among the mountains to the Widow Kitterick, whose eviction has made such a stir owing to Mr. Morley's letter. It was all terribly sad ; one longed to have one's ' Unionist ' friends there to see how things really are. Mr. O'Brien was going to speak in Dublin, so we travelled back as far as Athlone together, and then Mrs. Davies and I went down the Shannon to see the ' Seven Churches ' at Clonmacnoise, after which we

had a very interesting time at Thurles in County Tipperary. I hope on the 12th to send you a copy of *Doreen*; she is to appear on that day in one volume. We mean to try the experiment of not bringing her out in three volumes, and I am glad, as it must make a book read more quickly. Whether *financially* it will be so good I am not sure."

To another friend she writes in November :—

"I send you *Doreen* with ever so much love, and hope you will like her. For a long time you urged me to have a novel with a *heroine* as chief character, and—here it is. You must, however, be patient with Max, and remember that his health accounted for much, and that very very few Englishmen were able to be quite fair to Ireland at that time. The general election described is, of course, that of 1880."

And again, a little later :—

"*Doreen* has made a very good start, Mr. Longman says, and I hope she will continue well. I have had a charming letter from Justin M'Carthy about her, which pleased me doubly as coming from the Leader of the Irish and from a fellow-novelist. I am expecting hard words from some quarters, but as yet they have not arrived. What a relief it is to have as a set-off against the 'Dodos' and the Divorce Court novel of to-day, novels like Stevenson's *Catriona* and Stanley Weyman's delightful *Francis Cludde, Gentleman of France*, etc. I am working at my new novel on the stage, but find it rather a struggle, for I am still living much in *Doreen*, and Ireland is very absorbing."

Her crowning joy was the following letter from Mr Gladstone in his own handwriting :—

“ HAWARDEN CASTLE, CHESTER,  
“ 26th November, 1894.

“ DEAR MISS BAYLY,

“ I offer my best thanks to you for sending me *Doreen*. That leading character seems to me to be delineated with a remarkable boldness, yet without overstepping the limits of nature. What above all strikes me is the singular courage with which you stake your wide public reputation upon the Irish cause, knowing as you do the obstinacy of the cruel prejudices which still possess a portion of the people.

“ The only calamity Ireland had never known before has in these last years overtaken her by the breakdown of Parnell's personal character and the wretched course he pursued after it had happened. It has been very serious. It might conceivably even bring the physical force-men forward as the breakdown of O'Connell did ! But God avert the omen.

“ I say nothing of the characters from the life, in or outside the art circle : must I not say that in the one I know most of, you flatter like a portrait painter !

“ Believe me,

“ Most faithfully yours,

“ W. E. GLADSTONE.”

By way of contrast to this Edna Lyall had some years after a letter of which she writes to a friend :—

“ I had *such* an anonymous letter a few days ago,

saying that if only the writer were rich, he would buy up and burn every copy of that wicked and pernicious book, *Doreen*. The abuse was so tremendous that we could do nothing but laugh, which I fear would have disappointed the writer!"

Would it not be a misnomer to call him a "Unionist"?

The spring of 1895 was very cold and influenza was much about. Edna Lyall did not escape, but wrote just before she was taken ill:—

"I am quite well, but *so* cold. What must the poor people feel! I had a letter which made me almost cry from my poor tailoress friend . . . so dreadfully grateful for some old clothes A. had sent for her children and for some work she had just got in making 'pads' to make sloping-shouldered gentlemen the fashionable shape! She is the very pluckiest woman I know, and then sees fit to call me 'heaven's angel'! when I could no more endure all she has endured than fly. . . . Ralph struggles on, but the odds seem against him—it is as difficult to sit down and write in a sick house as in a holiday-making house. However, as Sir Walter used to say, 'I did my task this morning'."

Ralph is the hero of *Wayfaring Men*—the next book, with which she did not seem to make real progress until the autumn, when she spent a week with Mr. Ben Greet's company in order to have a "peep behind the scenes".

A letter in praise of *Doreen* about this time from

Mr. C. E. Maurice, whom she had once met at Mr. George Macdonald's house, pleased her very much, and she answered :—

“ Your kind letter about *Doreen* gave me such pleasure. As you can fancy, I have had some very scathing comments from other quarters, and as your criticisms came to me when I was ill with influenza and miserably depressed it was doubly cheering. It seems so hard to wait patiently through all the long delays of the Parliamentary system—but what must it seem to you who have been waiting since 1868? All that I have written with regard to the land system has been learnt from Mr. Michael Davitt and Mr. William O'Brien. I can never forget some of the scenes the latter showed me in Ireland. The character of Donal Moore in *Doreen* is founded on that of Michael Davitt, though one or two personal details I have purposely altered. He seems to me a most striking man. It is horrible to think of the way in which we have treated him in the past, but prison seems to have suited him as well as it did Joseph.”

During this summer came another general election, and Edna Lyall worked hard with the Liberals of Eastbourne in the effort to return Captain Brand to Parliament. She never canvassed, as she was not sure it was desirable, and anyhow did not feel it was the sort of work she could undertake, but on the polling day spent many hours looking up voters to go to the poll and beforehand helped in the clerical work. She wrote after :—



"We were sadly disappointed not to get Captain Brand returned, but he has reduced the Conservative majority to sixty, and they are in very low spirits."

She looked forward to the holidays with the prospect of being very lazy, and wrote amusingly from the Lakes of an excursion up Skiddaw :—

"We had a very nice day at Grasmere last week, and one day I actually climbed Skiddaw, going most of the way there on a pony. It *was* steep in one part ; you would have laughed to see the fearful jerks and bounds with which my steed heaved me up ! It was like going up a very steep staircase on horseback, and I thought every heave would be my last !"

One day, she says, being "desperately down, I went into Keswick and routed up local books and histories at the library and set to work weaving a new plot—last year of James II. and early part of William and Mary's reign".

This was the beginning of the book after next, which appeared three years later as *Hope the Hermit*.

It was early in October that Edna Lyall joined Mr. Greet's company at Liverpool to study for her next novel, staying in rooms with Mr. Greet's aunt and sister. Here she made a lasting friendship with a young actor in the company, Mr. A. S. Homewood, who in after years helped her with her one and only play, *In Spite of All*.

She thoroughly enjoyed this week, going to the succession of Shakespeare plays and to many re-

hearsals, and said, "It is great fun seeing all the little details of stage life".

Afterwards, when sending Mr. Homewood a copy of *Donovan*, she wrote how amused she had been to hear that he was "horrified" not to have read any of her novels, and continues :—

"I am not so vain as to imagine they are known by all the world ! and I have often been in your case with other novelists, and have been so afraid lest they should ask me point blank which of their books I had read !"

Another time she said how she had wanted to know if he had liked one of her books, but did not like to ask and risk giving him "an uncomfortable minute," as there was no knowing that he "had not stuck in the middle or altogether disliked the story !"

The touching little story, *How the Children Raised the Wind*, was written one winter's afternoon to "raise the wind" for the debt on the new church of St. Peter's at Eastbourne, and coming out just before Christmas, 1895, brought in a considerable sum of money. It was characteristic of Edna Lyall to show how the faith and love of two little children drew out all the best of the old man who was hardly judged by the outside world who differed from him in religious creed ; and the delicate allusion to the faith in the Unseen and the continuous help and sympathy of those who have passed out of our sight is very beautiful and suggestive.

The close of this year and the beginning of the next

was a very sad time politically, when the Armenian troubles too painfully seemed to be a repetition of the Bulgarian atrocities of 1876.

It is scarcely necessary to repeat how deeply Edna Lyall felt for, or rather with, all who were oppressed or unjustly treated. Her imagination was so strong that she realised the sorrows of those at a distance more vividly than many realise what is under their very eyes, and cruelty and wretchedness at home or abroad touched her as "one of a great family" as really as a personal trouble. Her first impulse was to help at any cost to herself. Indeed her chivalry at times ran away with her judgment, and caused her for the moment to lean entirely towards the side of those in distress, and it was only her strong sense of justice which counterbalanced this and enabled her to endeavour to see both sides of a question.

Writing in January, she says :—

"What a strange, sad time the world seems passing through just now! One hardly dares to read the reports from Armenia; it is so maddening to feel that we are doing nothing. I wonder whether English people are growing more selfish and inert? One can hardly believe that things are moving back—it is against all that one holds—yet certainly we seem now feeble and disgraced. Perhaps it is only a temporary stage—it *must* surely be that. And after all it is what one constantly sees in children. They do so well for a time, and then pass through a difficult stage and utterly puzzle their elders."

This spring, 1896, the play of "The Sign of the Cross" came down to Hastings and Edna Lyall went over there to see it. She was deeply impressed and went again many times after, taking her Sunday class when the company came to Eastbourne. In a paper on "Armenia," which she wrote to be read at a Women's Liberal meeting at Eastbourne in March, she said :—

"I believe that some ultra-sensitive people are afraid to go and see Wilson Barrett's play, 'The Sign of the Cross,' because it is about the early Christian persecutions and has a martyr for its heroine. For my part I wish that we could all go and see one of the noblest efforts made by a modern dramatist, the most uplifting play of this generation. And while we shudder at the sufferings of the Christians under Nero, let us say, 'The same things and worse are being done at this minute in Armenia, and what am I doing for the oppressed?'"

After seeing the play again, with Wilson Barrett in it in London, she writes to a friend who went with her :—

"I am afraid the play tired you ; the pain of it rather exhausts one, but to me the beauty of the leading idea quite makes up for that. . . . A scholar tells me that the best account of Nero's character is to be found in Tacitus, so I am going to look it up."

The following lines were written by her in an autograph book :—

“After seeing Wilson Barrett in ‘The Sign of the Cross’.

O'er the great mystery of pain we moan ;  
Clear proof it is, some say, that God there's none.  
And yet our God His only Son did send  
To show 'twas the mean unto an end.  
Pain nobly borne wins men to God each day ;  
*Our* crosses too may lighten up the way.  
'Grief shall be turned to joy' the Christ once said ;  
Trust Him ! lift up your heart and drooping head !  
'Christus hath triumphed' <sup>1</sup> and in Him we live.  
Evil shall cease. To God all glory give.”

Three years after, when it was brought down again to Eastbourne with other plays, Edna Lyall wrote :—

“I avoided ‘The Sign of the Cross,’ though there have been four performances. My fourteenth sight of  
\* it at Dartford shall be the final one.”

This year she spent part of the Shakespeare memorial week at Stratford-on-Avon, where Mr. Benson's company were acting. She stayed with a friend and two nephews at the Swan's Nest Hotel, and much enjoyed the novelty of being rowed down the river to the theatre in the beautiful spring evenings, “watching the mellow sunset sky and the church spire and the stately trees surrounding it, until the landlord rowed them up to the steps in the garden surrounding the theatre”.

Shakespeare's house, Kenilworth and Warwick were of course visited, and much was stored in her mind

<sup>1</sup> The last words of the Roman hero as he goes with Mercia to face the lions in the arena are : “Tell Nero that Christus hath triumphed ; Marcus, too, is a Christian”.

to be produced in *Wayfaring Men*, from which the quotation above is taken, and where there is a delightful description of the picturesque little town and its rural surroundings.

In June she went abroad with her niece and some friends for a month, and had a "delightful tour," visiting amongst other places St. Beatenberg, which is described in the opening pages of her next little book, *The Autobiography of a Truth*, of which she wrote to Mrs. Bonner, referring to her visit to Switzerland:—

"While there I wrote a little Armenian story which is to be published on the 20th August. *The Autobiography of a Truth* is being brought out by Longmans in the same style as the *Slander*, but it was much more difficult to write, for Truth is not so easily described, and the Armenian question is so difficult to deal with. But one's heart burns at the thought of the horrible cruelty and injustice of the Turkish Government, and I *had* to write something about it. How one longs for a brave, outspoken man like your father to speak for the Armenians and shame Englishmen into doing something for them! The reading of the five Blue Books on the Armenian Question is simply heart-rending work. Of course in this little story I have not dared to enter into details—they couldn't be printed in a book for general reading."

When she came home she "slaved," as she said, at the *Autobiography*, and by the time she sent it off to Mr. Longman was "pretty nearly played out with work and heat".

She wrote of the book to her publisher :—

“ Of course I scrupulously avoid anything like party politics, with which indeed the Armenian question seems to me to have nothing whatever to do. It is surely a *national* question, on which all parties and all shades of religious people can think alike.”

Of the cover of the book she said :—

“ I see the difficulty about the design of the cover ! Poets generally compare slanders to serpents and good words to angels. How would it be to have something like one of these cherubs with rays of light round it, and a suggestion of clouds rolling back ? ”

The book came out in August, but it lacked the brilliancy of the companion story, *The Autobiography of a Slander*. There was no spontaneity about it ; the author had been urged to write it and complied for the sake of Armenia ; and as the sooner it was out the better for the cause—she gave all the profits to the Armenian Relief Fund—she hurried through the writing of it during her holiday in Switzerland, correcting the proofs, etc., while visiting afterwards in England. It took a very great deal out of her ; the painful reading of the Blue Books, the realities of all the horrors of which she wrote, and her anxiety to stir up the apathetic and to do all in her power to stem the tide of cruelty and crime, made her almost ill, and her friends were glad when it was safely launched and she had gone up to the Lakes again for the holidays. But even there she could not rest at once, having “ a cruel number of letters to see to,” and “ rather a number

of headaches—three go-to-bed ones since leaving Eastbourne; but it has been rather a busy bit of life and one must pay for gadding about. Now I am browsing and lazying finely. Proofs of January *Ralph Denmead* just sent off.”

From there Edna Lyall wrote to her brother:—

“Our time at the Lakes is just over, and spite of broken weather we have very much enjoyed the lovely country, and even talk of coming a third time to this place. The Archbishop of York has been staying at a house about three miles off, and I have had two most interesting talks with him. He is such a kind, nice man, I am sure you would like him. We have also seen a good deal of Canon Rawnsley, who is very keen on helping the Armenians and has really done a great deal for them.”

She refers to one of the talks with the Archbishop when writing to a friend in the autumn on ideals.

“When I said that in one sense ‘the ideal is the real,’ I meant that in every man and woman there is that Divine bit of the nature—hidden in some, clearly to be seen in others, but always there and to be believed in—the most real lasting part of us, and that which makes the struggle to conquer the baser part of us full of hope. What you say as to people ‘needing to brush their clothes as they go through the muddy roads of life,’ is surely true of *all* of us? Certainly it is true of those who have the responsibility of living in what you rightly call the ‘delightful calm of a happy home’. Your simile is, after all, only a different



way of putting what the Archbishop of York told me the other day was the right rendering of Revelation xxii. 14: 'Blessed are they that *are washing* their robes'; and this literal translation he explained as 'Happy are those who are cleansing their characters,' making them pure with the self-sacrificing love which Christ can impart."

This summer Edna Lyall was reading anything she "could lay her hands on" connected with the period of history of the Revolution of 1688, as material for her next book, the scene of which was to be laid chiefly in the north of England. Whilst staying in the Lake district she was eagerly gleaning information from the inhabitants of all classes and visited many of the villagers, drawing them on to talk of old times and tell the legends and folk-lore which still pertain to that part of the world.

Arrangements had been made early in this year for the publication of the book with Messrs. Longmans, also with the firm of *The Christian World*, through which paper it was first to run, and when she returned to Eastbourne in the autumn she set to work immediately.

In October she writes to Mrs. Bonner as follows:—

"I take a keen interest in prison reform, and shall be delighted to be on the General Committee. Mr. Davitt spoke a great deal to me about the dearth of really interesting books in prison libraries; with some few exceptions they are mostly little story-books suited to Sunday-school children, not in the least likely to appeal to men."

*Wayfaring Men* commenced in *Good Words* in January, 1897, and writing to an aunt in March she says :—

“I liked your comments on *Wayfaring Men* very much. The American proofs are just finished, but I still have to revise for the English volume, and my actor friend, Mr. Homewood, is very kindly helping me to correct it. It is a great thing to have a friend at court like that—one learns the ins and outs of the life so much better.”

She concludes another letter this spring to a friend by saying :—

“I wish time would go slower ; it is beginning to race ! That, I suppose, is a sign of old age, but I am inclined to think Rabbi Ben Ezra was right.”

A letter referring to capital punishment was written to Mrs. Bonner in April.

“I have to thank you for the most interesting pamphlet on *Capital Punishment*, etc. . . . It seems to me likely to do real good and make people think. My chief difficulty as to accepting the entire abolition of capital punishment is that our penal servitude for life seems so likely to turn a hot, passionate temperament—such as the majority of murderers probably possess—absolutely mad, or at any rate to drive them in the direction of insanity. Then at the end of several years they are once more let loose on the world, heavily handicapped. When prisons are better organised this objection may be done away with. But the case of the dynamite prisoners made one

realise how bad the present state of things is. With the flogging part of the pamphlet I entirely agree, and only this week was reading in Lord Roberts' life a curious confirmation of it. Have you read that, by-the-bye? It is most interesting—at least the first volume is; I am still in that. At the same time I am reading that book on the Indian Mutiny which is so much talked of just now — Mrs. Steel's *On the Face of the Waters*. It is very interesting, as it is really written by one who knows the *natives* and can look at things from their point of view."

This year Edna Lyall went up to the Women Writers' Dinner, at which Mrs. Annie Steele presided. She thoroughly enjoyed the evening and meeting others of her profession. Miss Rowland-Grey writes of this occasion :—

"I was with her at her only appearance at the Women Writers' Dinner in 1897 and remember how she seemed to enjoy it, and how she regretted that her health did not allow her to be more often present on such occasions. She was essentially a good comrade, with a deep, unselfish interest in her fellow-women."

There is an interesting letter on anonymous abuse written about this time to a friend who had been unjustly attacked.

"Waspish anonymous attacks of this sort have often stung me rather badly (reviews or letters calling me an atheist and other hard names). It seems to me that we two are in the same boat! Do you know this bit of Thomas à Kempis? It has often helped me :—

Useful it is for man to suffer contradiction  
 (Though he does well, means well),  
 When men think ill of him, or know but half the truth,  
*These* are the guides that lead to lowliness,  
 That shield him from vain-glory;  
 For then, when outwardly men hold us cheap,  
 When they will hear no good of us,  
 Clearer we look towards God, the inner Witness of our deeds."

The following is a little letter written to a small cousin of two-and-a-half years old:—

"6 COLLEGE ROAD, EASTBOURNE,  
 "29th March, 1897.

"MY DEAR I.,

"How very kind of you to send me such a lovely book on my birthday! Thank you very much, darling—and for your kisses, too. I wish I had you to hug—that would be nicer than scribbling with pen and ink. Don't you think it high time that you and father and mother and B. came to stay at Eastbourne? You would find eight moderately young cousins to play with, and even the middle-aged cousins have some play left in them still, and would love to have you. We all went primrosing on my birthday to a place called Polegate where there is a nice wood.

"It was very windy, but the wood was sheltered and delightfully muddy. E. and K. thought that the best part of the fun and were quite proud of their brown boots and stockings. I wonder if you like playing about in the mud? and think it ever so much nicer than pavement?

"Give my love to mother,

"And believe me, dear I.,

"Your loving cousin,

"ELLIE."

The next letter explains itself, and was published in many papers :—

*“ 1st July, 1897.*

“ SIR,

“ As a descendant of the Burges family, I venture to ask space in your columns to protest against the conduct of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's. Acting in utter disregard of the express wishes of those who have a right to be consulted, they insist on removing from the place it has always occupied in the south aisle the monument erected to the memory of the late Captain Burges, R.N., who was killed at Camperdown, and intend to remove it to the crypt. The monument was erected by the nation to the honour of a brave man who laid down his life for his country, and we cannot think that fair-minded Englishmen will, without a strong protest, allow the nation's tribute to an eighteenth century hero to be removed because a peer desires that the monument of a nineteenth century painter shall take its place. St. Paul's is wide, and may surely offer an unoccupied site for the memorial to Lord Leighton.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Yours truly,

“ ADA ELLEN BAVLY,

“ ‘ Edna Lyall ’.”

Happily the injustice was averted and the monument stands there to this day, and not only reminds us of a brave hero, but of the struggling days of Edna

Lyall, who there gained fresh courage and resolved "to die fighting too". She refers amusingly to the question in a letter to her brother.

"So many thanks for your letter. I was very much interested and shall be so glad to hear what happens. I almost think a bodyguard of Burgeses and Baylys ought to be on guard in St. Paul's to-morrow to see that they don't surreptitiously begin moving the Captain! . . . After all, I did see the Jubilee, as on the Saturday before the Clarkes sent me a ticket for their office in Fleet Street—such a capital view from a first-floor window—and thanks to their good arrangements I was not a bit too tired. I hoped that you had seen it too when we found how much less alarming the crowd was than people had prophesied."

This was a very busy summer, as not only were there constant proofs of *Wayfaring Men* to be corrected, the next book, *Hope the Hermit*, to continue writing, but also Edna Lyall undertook an appreciation of Mrs. Gaskell for the volume published under the title of *Women Novelists of Queen Victoria's Reign*. It was a great pleasure to her to write this as she loved Mrs. Gaskell's books, and, as one review said, it was perhaps the most delightful paper in the book.

For refreshment Miss Bayly went often to the theatre, frequently going up to London for a night or two. Her novel, *In the Golden Days*, had been dramatised by Mr. Edwin Gilbert, and she went to see the special performance at the Matinée Theatre (St. George's Hall), and afterwards wrote him her congratulations,

Her holiday came none too soon for she was quite over-tired; and when attacked once more by influenza became really ill and suffered a good deal from ear-ache and neuralgia. However, nothing daunted, she resolved to take the long journey to the Lakes on the day arranged, and with strict injunctions from the doctor to travel as an invalid and go to bed directly she arrived, she set off with the others and “stood the fourteen hours grandly”. With the rest and change she soon got well and comparatively strong again, and started on what she called her “Tour in the Provinces” before settling down again to work, hoping after the long holiday to get on better with the story which she evidently felt was not “going,” for referring to it at this time she says:—

“Some one told me yesterday a quaint old saying which seemed to me rather a good tonic for days when one has no heart for one’s work: ‘All discouragement comes from the devil’. If that is true, it is just a call to battle.”

*Wayfaring Men* came out in one volume in October and started well. She writes of an amusing episode in connection with the book soon after.

“Two large boxes of Bath-buns and Bath-olivers have just arrived from Mr. Fortt, the Milsom Street confectioner, to the children’s delight. It seems that he had noticed in *Wayfaring Men* that Ivy ran out during rehearsal ‘to buy Bath-buns at Fortt’s,’ and so begged me to accept them! I feel as if I ought to send them to Miss Mackenzie, because it was her bag of buns at one of the Liverpool rehearsals that made me think of it!”

At the end of the year she writes :—

“ The whole family has dispersed to three different parties and I feel like Cinderella. However, thanks to my stylograph, I can go on with my novel and finish a duel scene near Crosthwaite.”

In the Christmas number of *The Lady's Realm* she published some verses which had been written some time before. As many may not have seen them, this chapter may fitly conclude with them.

#### THE CRITIC.

It was only a picture : rippling stream,  
With bare trees arching overhead,  
A trout stream swirling swiftly on,  
And a background of sunset rosy red.  
And the critic frowned—“ This painter's art  
Is bad and surely bad his heart ! ”  
But the picture gladdened a sick man's gloom,  
It brought the country into his room.

It was only a ballad, blithe and gay,  
A simple air, a sweet refrain ;  
No morbid thought, no wild despair,  
No discord to give a hint of pain.  
And the critic scoffed—“ 'Tis out of date ;  
This tuneful sweetness palls of late ! ”  
But the song was sung in many a clime,  
It cheered sad souls, and it lessened crime.

It was only a play : a Christmas piece,  
With many a gay and gallant knight ;  
Not a word of vice, not a vulgar thought  
Spoiled its sweetness or marred its light.  
And the critic sneered—“ This will not pay  
Your moral pieces have had their day ”.  
But in many a town it warmed dull hearts  
With the glow pure mirth full oft imparts.

—EDNA LYALL.





## CHAPTER X.

WAR—1898-1900.

Reading Societies—*Hope the Hermit*—Italy—Illness—Mr. J. J. Green—Dolgelly—Mr. Walford—Mr. C. E. Maurice—Duelling and war—The Peace Crusade—Friendship—Mr. Ruskin—The War—The play *In Spite of All*—Mr. Homewood's account of it.

## CHAPTER X.

WAR—1898-1900.

“The day is not so far off as men dream when duelling and war will be looked on as brutalities of a bygone time, when the beast in man was scarce tamed.”—*Hope the Hermit*.

THERE are comparatively few letters written by Edna Lyall in the year 1898, as she was taken very seriously ill in the spring.

In January, when, as usual, sending flowers to Mrs. Bonner, she refers to the book then in hand.

“Just now I am very busy working away at the last part of *Hope the Hermit*, while the first is running as a serial. This is to me a most dreadful process, and I have almost made up my mind to give up serial publication. It is so horrid to feel driven, and results, I fear, in bad work.”

To another friend whom she had invited to join a Reading Society, of which she was President, she wrote at this time :—

“As to the Reading Society, I *quite* understand your feeling, and indeed these rules with their 10.30 P.M. time limit and Sunday holiday are specially awkward for you. I always tout a little for new members at the beginning of the year, as part

of a President's duty ! . . . I should have felt just as you did about the other reading circle you spoke of. Somehow to pledge oneself to any set time in things connected with religion has always been impossible to me. Soon such things tend to grow formal and lifeless, and suggest rosaries and mechanical prayer-mills. Besides, it seems to me a wrong system. Fancy binding oneself to talk for a set time to one's father, or to read his letters for so long each day ! As long as we never lose touch—never let other things crowd out what should be nearest—I cannot see that the time element need come in. Of course I may be quite wrong, and only tell you how things seem to me. One thing I have come to believe in very much since studying Quaker life, and that is in taking *some* time during the day, but with no fixed rule as to time whatever, for being absolutely still and waiting for thoughts to be given you. Nowadays we all rush about so much that we are often half-starved spiritually. Quiet like this seems to me what we all need so badly just now. However I am treating you to quite a Friends' meeting and must stop. . . . Excuse this stylographic scrawl written in a recumbent posture ! Did you ever hear of the poor woman who, finding her medicine labelled 'To be taken in a *recumbent posture*,' sent all round the village to see if she could borrow one ?”

She tells another intimate friend in January that she is working in the morning and again in the afternoon.

“ And have now left Mary Denham enjoying Lodore, and have settled in my mind the last act of villainy on Henry Brownrigg’s part. They must have a little more agony before the happy ending, you see ! ”

Through January and February she was constantly ailing and very much harassed and overworked in finishing *Hope the Hermit*. Owing to some mistake on the part of an agent she ran great risk of losing the American copyright of the book, and in one week corrected and revised MS. almost all day, as thirty chapters had to be hurried off without delay. After this she wrote :—

“ I am getting on with *Hope the Hermit* and hope to get it done by March, after which I begin to long for a holiday and perhaps a short visit to Italy or the south of France. I want fresh ideas and to see new places, only the worst of it is one has to leave home and all one’s kith and kin, and that is such a wrench.”

Early in March, thoroughly tired out, she started for a short holiday in Italy with the friends with whom she had been there as a girl. They went to Genoa and then stayed near Carrara, but unfortunately, owing probably to her state of health at the time, Edna Lyall contracted malarial fever, and in less than a month they were on their way home again, where, with the intensity of a sick person’s longing, it was her one desire to be.

To enable her to manage the long journey they stayed at several places on the way, and often afterwards she would speak of the nightmare it was to

arrive at the hotel feeling as if she would not be able to get up again if she went to bed, and dreading the prospect of illness in a foreign hotel, with all the trouble and anxiety which it would entail upon others. Sheer pluck and determination kept her going, and when at last she arrived at home one evening early in April she went straight to bed, where she remained for more than seven weeks ; at first ill with very high fever and then with an abscess in the ear that necessitated an operation, immediately after which she began to recover. There are two pencil notes written at this time to her friend Mr. Homewood, saying how the pain had taken away all her ideas and how she daren't look forward, " this illness seems so slow ". The other, a few weeks later, says :—

" I took you at your word and didn't write till I was better ; now though still in bed and very weak I am scarcely at all feverish. I am wondering so much how your affairs are going. How you will laugh when I tell you that one night having had one of the very vivid dreams that come in influenza, I quite thought you had got a splendid permanent situation at the Lyceum and telegraphed to tell me. When my nurse came about three A.M. with some medicine I said to her, ' Where was that telegram which came this evening ? ' ' I never saw any telegram,' she said, and alas ! I soon realised that the delightful ' engagement ' was a dream ! May it soon come true. . . . Too tired for more."

She was deeply concerned to learn of Mr. Glad-

stone's illness, and feeling very weak herself spoke with much sympathy of him. "It is all very well to say he is only weak and not suffering," she said, "but I know that intense weakness is suffering." He was much in her thoughts, and she rejoiced with him when she heard he had "crossed the bar," and all her sympathy went out to Mrs. Gladstone and his family. Her convalescence was very slow and tedious, and in June she writes :—

"They condemn me to writing no more books for two years—a prospect which rather daunts me, as I am never so happy as when at work."

Her doctor also told her she must never again promise a novel beforehand by any definite time, as he was sure she had been overworking.

In July, Edna Lyall was allowed to write letters again, and began to wade through the correspondence which had accumulated during her illness.

Some months before Mr. J. J. Green, of Tunbridge Wells, had written in reference to her "excellent Quaker story," then being published weekly in *The Christian World*. He pointed out two inaccuracies of expression in the language of George Fox, and now was gratified to receive the following letter :—

"6 COLLEGE ROAD, EASTBOURNE,

"9th July, 1898.

"DEAR SIR,

"I should have answered your kind letter before, but when it arrived I was in Italy, and on my return I was terribly ill for three months with malarial

fever. I am so grateful to you for pointing out that George Fox would have called St. Dunstan's a Steeple House, and have made the alteration in the proofs of the book and also the one about 'seventh month'. I have been intensely interested in studying the early history of the Friends, and feel inclined to envy you your good brave ancestors.

"Yours very truly,

"ADA ELLEN BAYLY,

"'Edna Lyall'."

As soon as she was well enough to travel she went to Caterham, then joined her family in London, and went with them to Wales as they had taken a house in Dolgelly for the holidays. Soon after arriving she wrote to her aunt at Caterham:—

"Here we are safely settled in one of the loveliest places I have ever seen, high above Dolgelly and quite in the country, with the first spur of Cader Idris rising behind us, a lovely wood and a little waterfall bounding our garden, and mountains—at present nameless to us—to be seen from our sitting-room windows. . . . I feel so much stronger since my delightful time with you, dear auntie. It was a most enjoyable end to my illness, and to have both the uncles was very refreshing. . . . An American lady writes to me that she is bringing her daughter to school in England and wants her to go to the school described in *Way-faring Men*, if it exists! and begs me to send her the address! Isn't it amusing?"



Another experience of the kind was not quite so pleasant ; she tells of it in a letter to her sister-in-law.

“ I have just had such a funny call from a mad girl, who burst into tears and said I had put her into one of my books ! However, after a little I managed to quiet her and to assure her that it was all a mistake, and we shook hands and parted most amicably ! ”

One or two letters passed between Edna Lyall and Mr. Green this summer, and he offered to lend her books about the early Friends, for which she thanks him very much, and says :—

“ I should be most grateful if you would lend me Mrs. Webb's *Penns and Penningtons* and *Thomas Ellwood's Life*. I wonder if by any chance you have a copy of *Pennington's Letters* ? The Archbishop of York told me they were so good, and for more than a year I have tried to get a copy to read.”

Mr. Green was able to lend her the books, and at the end of her visit to Dolgelly she returned them with a letter of thanks, saying they were most interesting, and adding :—

“ Thank you very much for your kind words about *Hope the Hermit* ; they cheered me very much. . . . Are you not thankful that the Czar's message seems to give hope that at last the peace you have so long striven for is near at hand ? ”

The Czar's proposal to hold an international conference with a view to promote a reduction in the armaments of all nations and so urge arbitration

instead of war, which eventually took place at The Hague, filled her with hope and joyful enthusiasm.

Writing from Farnham in September she refers to the agitation caused in the religious world by Mr. Kensit's protest against the Ritualists, and says:—

“Did you see *The Times*' article on the Church last Saturday, also the correspondence that day? If not, do read it. I think at last people are thoroughly roused. If only Mr. Kensit won't irritate them too much! I am glad no one went to his Eastbourne meeting; there would probably have been a fight. But I am glad the Church Congress conveners have asked him to speak, for I think every one should have a hearing.”

She never entered into party strife, and though a staunch Churchwoman, at this time when ritual in worship was being made so much of, she turned with relief to the simplicity and spirituality of the Society of Friends, though not, of course, going so far as they do in avoiding all forms.

This summer Edna Lyall had some further correspondence with Mr. Walford, who willingly gave her his help and advice in a question that had arisen about *Hope the Hermit*. This novel proved to be much shorter, by about 45,000 words, than the standard novel of the agreement with the publishers of *The Christian World*. She told them that she was very sorry to put them to inconvenience, but that the story had worked out rather more quickly than she had expected; that she never could bind herself to any

exact number of pages. It was suggested that the difficulty should be met by her promising a future serial novel by way of compensation ; but as she was prohibited from writing for two years, and it was unlikely she could have anything ready for publication for fully three years, Edna Lyall felt this impossible, for, as she said, all that time she would be worried by the feeling that she was in debt, and though she quite hoped to have "many more working years" there was no denying that her health was very uncertain, and it was better not to promise what she might be unable to carry out. She considered the only honourable way for her under the circumstances was to ask the firm, Messrs. James Clarke & Co., who throughout the affair had acted most pleasantly, to deduct from the final cheque a fair sum as compensation, and when this was agreed upon she wrote gratefully to Mr. Walford, who had been the arbitrator and had fortunately been able to make an arrangement which was quite satisfactory to both sides :—

"Thank you very much indeed for your kind help. I fear it has given you a great deal of trouble. . . . I only wish I could better put into words all that I feel as to the way in which you have tided me through the difficulty."

In October, when the book was published, she wrote to her aunt at Caterham :—

'I am sending you and uncle a copy of my new story which is just published. At last I have got my wish and am printed on nice light paper, not on the

heavy-loaded kind. I think it has made a good start, as Mr. Longman tells me 9,000 sold on the day of publication."

It is an acknowledged fact that the same idea often occurs simultaneously to two or more scientists or artists or authors who are entirely unknown to each other: This happened to Edna Lyall. As soon as she discovered it she wrote to Mr. Homewood as a friend of Mr. Mason:—

"If you see Mr. Mason this week will you tell him that I have just seen the short notice of *Laurence Clavering* in *Black and White*, and am dismayed to find that his book deals with one of the Jacobite plots. . . . We have unluckily both chosen the Lake district for our background, and although it is my villain who has to hide among the hills of the country around Keswick, and his hero, yet it is provoking that we should have pitched upon the very same neighbourhood. It is too late for me to alter now, for I have been studying it up for some years, and already the first seven chapters have gone to press for the serial edition. So I think it will be best that I should not read *Laurence Clavering* till after my book is published next autumn! . . . We seem fated to come across each other in some way, for originally my story was called *A Romance of Borrowdale*! Then I found out that Mr. Mason already had published one called *A Romance of Wastdale*, so I had to take refuge in the title of *Hope the Hermit*, a title which sounds well enough, but has not much connection with the story."

Some years before this Mr. C. E. Maurice had written to Edna Lyall, being anxious to enlist her services in a project he had for publishing a series of historical novels dealing with the peace question at different times and from different aspects. The suggestion interested her much, and she replied to his letter :—

“Forgive me for having allowed a month to go by without replying, but it was not a matter one could decide in a hurry. My difficulty is this: I cannot write a line until the subject, as it were, takes possession of me, and therefore always have a difficulty in promising work beforehand. Then, too, it is an understood thing that my next novel or story should first run through a newspaper. . . . The suggestion which I most took to in your letter was the one as to the protest against duelling. Do you think Daniel O’Connell would do for the hero? To my mind he was essentially a ‘hero of peace,’ having made so great an effort to win reforms in a constitutional way. He once fought a duel and killed his antagonist, which gave him such a horror of the whole system that he would never fight another, though I imagine (judging from modern times) he must often have been in a position when the custom of the day expected him to fight. Will you let me know whether a story in which O’Connell should be one of the chief characters would be likely to suit your ideas. If it should do so, I will begin to read up the subject next year.”

The scheme fell through, but doubtless the idea had taken possession of her and was in her mind when *Hope the Hermit* began to take definite shape, in which story she deals with the subjects of duelling and war from the Quaker point of view. In it there are several delightful glimpses of the seventeenth century Friends, and the study of the history of their lives at that time was an immense interest to her.

But undoubtedly this novel is lacking in vitality, as she well knew, and wrote to a friend: "Several people have said to me that *Hope the Hermit* would make a good play. I know to my sorrow that it is an ill-constructed novel, but you know partly under what difficulties it was written." And again:—

"The reviewers were quite right in saying that it was badly constructed. The changes . . . were in-artistic, and only represent the over-tired and heavy-hearted writer in desperation."

The following letter, written at Christmas time to Mrs. Bonner, gives an idea of her manner of life now that she was in a sense *hors de combat*.

"We are very busy getting ready for our usual tree on Xmas Eve, but this year we are ambitious and mean to try a snow scene with three or four trees and a *hill*! I got the idea from Mr. Birrell's *Life of Sir Frank Lockwood*. I am so sorry about Sir Wm. Harcourt's retirement, having always liked and respected him very much. It all seems a strange confusion, and it is difficult for an outsider to understand it. You ask how I am getting on: wonderfully well,

thank you, dear, though still having to take care and rest a good deal. I have been amusing myself with water-colour painting as they don't want me to write until I absolutely *must*, and I have not yet that burning desire to have my say, but can still enjoy a waiting time."

Writing to her actor friend about this time, she alludes again to her painting in connection with his "make up".

"I was interested in what you said about your experiments in 'making up'. How extraordinary it must be to have to study distant effects for one's face! It must be quite an art. The things which just now hopelessly baffle me are trees. I have that picture of Watts'<sup>1</sup> you spoke of—I mean a photograph from it—in my sitting-room. But you lose much because the face of the Angel of Love is so dark, and you miss, of course, the wonderful colouring of the wing. It had never struck me that it was on Mrs. Browning's poem. . . . My doctor gives me leave to write once more if I will never promise work beforehand. I don't mean to be in any hurry though, for as yet there is nothing<sup>\*</sup> that I feel I *must* say. I am, moreover, divided between the wish to try a story of life about fifty years ago, and the wish to write about Donovan's children—which would have to be present day, of course. At present I seem to do little but despatch nephews and nieces to Christmas parties, and nurse the ones who take cold after their dissipation. This

<sup>1</sup> "The Happy Warrior."

doesn't give me much to tell you about, so forgive a dull letter," etc.

A letter written to Mrs. Bonner in the following January, 1899, speaks of the Peace Meeting which Edna Lyall was getting up in Eastbourne.

"I am hard at work just now on this Peace Crusade, and we hope soon to have a Public Meeting in Eastbourne. Who do you consider the most effective speaker? I expect we shall have to be thankful for any one Mr. Corrie Grant can send us; there must be a great run upon them just now. The collecting signatures has been rather interesting work, and I hope all shades of opinion are going to pull well together. What a success the Plymouth and Brighton meetings seem to have been."

Later on in the same letter she speaks of hoping before very long to be at work again, and goes on to say:—

"The only thing I am meditating is just half a page or so in a book being brought out by Mr. Andrew Reid, author of *Why I am a Liberal*, to greet the new century. It seems to me a difficult thing to do to much purpose! Still, I don't want ungraciously to refuse."

The following was a postscript to a letter written on a private matter, to a lady whose sister had been a great sufferer, and whom, when in Eastbourne, Miss Bayly had frequently visited:—

"I must just let you know that the successful Peace Meeting here the other night was really your sister's



work. I wanted very much to be a volunteer in this Peace Crusade, but hesitated to promise work because I am so handicapped by my health just now. Then one night I looked at her photograph on my mantelpiece, and remembered how she worked up to the very end even when she could hardly hold the [knitting] pins, so I took heart, joined the Crusade, and with the help of Alderman Strange got up the meeting."

It was a great satisfaction to her to have arranged this meeting, and to sit on the platform with people of all creeds and politics united in the desire for peace, but her exertions and the excitement were too much for her, and cost her severe headache and many days in bed. She paid the price willingly, and in March being chosen one of four delegates to represent Eastbourne at the big Peace Meeting in London, she went up for the night, and writes afterwards to an aunt, when acknowledging her birthday letters:—

"Thank you all so much for your loving remembrance of my birthday and for the pretty cases. It is appalling to think I am *forty-two*! But as far as feeling goes I feel younger than last birthday, after my luxurious time of unprofessional life. It is rather pleasant just for a while to be a lady at large! The Peace Convention went off very well and Queen's Hall was crowded and enthusiastic. It was wonderful to think that each one of that great gathering of delegates represented 10,000 people. Of course, Mr. John Morley's illness and absence was a bitter disappointment, but Mr. Leonard Courtney made a very

powerful speech, and Mr. Stead was really brilliant. . . . I sat on the platform and was delighted to find myself next my friend, Mrs. Bonner (Mr. Bradlaugh's daughter). She has been working very hard all these months on the Committee, and between whiles we had quite a nice little chat. The weather was cruel. It had snowed all the afternoon, and as we drove to Ladbrooke Square about 11 o'clock the roads were like glass, and our horse threatened to come down in spite of the sand which gangs of men were scattering. The next day I went shopping (tell Uncle B. a Parisian toque nearly ruined me, as for once I really had gone to choose the proverbial head-gear!). Then we went to the Dudley gallery and saw Verstchagin's pictures. They are most striking, especially the ones of Napoleon's Russian campaign—in fact, A. J., who was with me, nearly joined the Peace Crusade on the spot. His painting of snow is most wonderful. . . . I enjoyed *Dr. Dale* very much, and am now enjoying Archdeacon Wilson's Hulsean Lectures, *The Gospel of the Atonement*. I think you would like it. M. gave me *Concerning Isabel Carnaby*. It does well for reading aloud and seems most clever."

There is a letter of Edna Lyall's written this spring to a young friend which shows the sacredness with which she regarded friendship. She was herself that best kind of friend who is

An atmosphere warm with all inspirations clear.

"She influenced people chiefly by loving them; you never felt that she was trying to doctor you, or to

improve your moral or religious health ;” but her life was a constant challenge, “ Friend, come up higher—higher along with me ; that you and I may be those true lovers who are nearest to God when nearest to each other”. And her friends knew that, as Emerson puts it, “ the uprising of nature in us to the same degree ” would alone avail to establish us in such relations with her as she and we desired.

She valued greatly all love that came to her, and was very sensitive to the expression of it. She was the confidante of many, who knew her to be trusted never to give away other people’s secrets, and she had the power of throwing herself so completely into their interests that each one felt her to be his or her own particular friend, having the love and sympathy for many which smaller natures can only give to one.

There was no self-seeking or pettiness in the friendship of Edna Lyall ; thinking of others and not of herself, it never occurred to her to doubt the love of her friends or to weigh it with her own in the other scale ; and there was no jealousy in her nature—she said she could not understand the feeling. Like Mary Denham in *In the Golden Days* it was of others’ happiness that she thought, “ her own was a secondary matter, therefore there could be no jealousy in her love ” ; and her attitude towards that vice was that of her heroine in *In Spite of All* : “ If there is one thing I despise, ’tis jealousy ! ”

“ Love is not like a pudding,” she would say laughingly, of which if one had a large helping another

must have less, but rather like a never-failing spring from which the more you take the more wells up.

The letter referred to above runs as follows :—

“It was nice of you to tell me that *A Hardy Norseman* had helped to pass some of your lonely times. A certain amount of loneliness seems inevitable for everybody, but it is hard to bear because it seems unnatural and as if it couldn't be good. Yet I think it is often the very thing which makes us realise that we never are really alone however lonely we may feel. And now since I am touching on these matters about which we are all reserved (to a great extent, no doubt, *rightly* reserved), I will screw up my courage to ask you to do one thing. I want our friendship to be on a high level, and it seems to me that nothing does keep at its best unless it is practical and in close touch with the Unseen. Will you use with me the collect for the twentieth Sunday after Trinity? I don't mean pledging ourselves to use it every day (we might forget or be prevented) but using it when we can. I suggest that one because I like the ‘cheerfully accomplish’ and the ‘being ready’ idea, but if you prefer any other will you suggest it? or if for any reason you dislike the plan then please tell me so plainly. On looking it out in the American Prayer-book I see they have altered our ‘cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldest have done,’ into ‘cheerfully accomplish those things which Thou commandest’—much the same thought, but I rather prefer our old-fashioned phrase. Now it has struck

twelve and I must go down to the sea. It ought to be a fine one to-day for we have had a most stormy night."

Early in May Edna Lyall went to Devonshire, staying two nights at the quaint little village of Clovelly, then going on to Lynton and afterwards to visit relations at Plymouth. She then went to Lincoln and Woodhall Spa, and from there wrote to a friend who was an invalid and in trouble the following sympathetic letter :—

"I was so grieved to hear from my sister of dear Miss F.'s death, and you and Miss S. are very much in my thoughts. It is beautiful to think of *her* happiness and freedom from pain, but the blank to you must be terrible. I must not try to write much, for so often written words seem only to hurt, but I know you understand how dearly I love you both and long to be able to do more for you. I wonder if when I come home during the first week in June you will let me come in at some settled times during the week to read to you. It would be such a pleasure to me to do some little thing for you, dear Miss F."

To a young friend also in trouble at this time she wrote :—

"And the best part is that I know, from what you write, your pain hasn't been wasted, and that you must have taken it in the way which makes it all worth while. Isn't it wonderful how we are helped to know God, not by arguments, or dogmas, or much thought, but just by feeling the need of Him in our

great joys and great troubles, and then realising that, as Tennyson puts it—

Closer is He than breathing and nearer than hands and feet."

In July she writes to Mrs. Bonner of their summer plans, and continues :—

"What do you think of the doings at The Hague? I have so little opportunity here of learning how things strike people in general. No one seems much to care about outside matters—they say that is often the way in watering-places. My last attempt has been the writing of a play. Whether it will succeed I don't know. It is founded on a true incident in the Great Civil War, and the scene is laid in Herefordshire. If it is produced I will let you have a notice of the performance. The writing has been a pleasure, but I can't judge whether it is worth anything."

Grasmere proved a delightful summer abode, or rather the "Fairy Glen," which stood out of Grasmere, and had a pretty garden and grand views all round. Edna Lyall wrote that they were having "such a happy time and glorious weather, but rather hazy from heat," and says in a letter to a friend in Scotland :—

"I am so glad that you are enjoying Scotland. Isn't Scotch colouring exquisite. I know Rob Roy's grave and Loch Awe and Loch Tay. It is nice to be able to picture you. Just think, some very pleasant people, the Wares (he is Bishop of Barrow), have promised to take me to Brantwood next Wednesday, and Mrs. Severn has sent most kind messages. Of

course we shall have to chance seeing Mr. Ruskin, as very often he is not well enough to see visitors. But I *hope*."

Edna Lyall was not disappointed, but saw Mr. Ruskin for a few minutes. She could not talk much with him, for not only was he very feeble and weak, but also rather deaf, and her voice was not strong enough to make him hear. But he spoke a few pleasant words about her books, and when he died, a few months later, a friend sent her an extract which she acknowledged as follows :—

"How kind of you to send me that cutting from *The Times*. It is a great pleasure to hear that Mr. Ruskin was reading *In the Golden Days*, and I thought it so sweet of Mrs. Severn to mention it. Are you not glad that the funeral was a quiet one at Coniston? It seemed so much more what he would have wished. The Miss Wakefield who sang at the service was an old school friend of Mrs. Jameson's, and has a most exquisite voice."

In her usual round of visits this year she went to York, to the old Hall in Suffolk, to Beccles, and then on to Bosbury, from where, with her mind full of the play, *In Spite of All*, which she had just finished, she writes :—

"From the window where I write I have a full view of the tower, the south porch and the cross, with a few village houses to the right, and can almost fancy I see Waghorne flinging texts, and Gabriel listening, half amused, half disgusted."

From Caterham she writes of the negotiations with the Transvaal which at this time were causing all England much anxiety. As one of the Vice-Presidents of the Eastbourne Women's Liberal Association, she helped to draw up the resolution which was sent up by the association to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain in September, earnestly protesting against our plunging into a war in South Africa, and praying that the more pacific means of arbitration might be used. Edna Lyall wrote to a Liberal friend at Eastbourne :—

“ I much approve of the bringing in the arbitration sentence into the resolution. . . . My blood boils rather when I hear people calmly discussing the destruction of the Dutch. No doubt the Boers are very far indeed from being angels, but the calm assumption that we *must* be right is irritating.”

When war was declared her sorrow was great indeed, for not only was she beginning to think that all war was wrong, but this war in particular she, with many others, considered unnecessary, and might have been avoided by wiser negotiations. She compiled the following prayer for use in her Sunday class with the heading :—

“ They only pray for peace whose lives prepare  
The everlasting kingdom of their prayer.

“ Heavenly Father, give us Thy Spirit of truth and love and strong patience. Help us to be peacemakers. Deliver us as a nation from the love of luxury, the greed of gain, and from those evil desires which lead



to war and strife. And we beseech Thee grant us each and all Thy grace, that, forsaking evil, we may follow the blessed steps of Thy Son, the Saviour of the world, in whose name we pray. Amen."

At Christmas time, writing to Mrs. Bonner, she says:—

"This terrible war almost breaks one's heart. But I hope, as you say, it may help the nation to sober down and to realise the hatefulness of the Jingo spirit."

A letter to her niece at Bosbury tells of the progress of preparations for the production of her play early in the year, and also mentions a present which she is sending her for her confirmation.

"We are so delighted that you will all come for the play on the 4th of January. Tell mother we can quite well house you all, and we hope you will stay as late as you can on Friday as Emma<sup>1</sup> is coming for the second night of the play, and would in that way manage to have a glimpse of you all. We are hard at work getting things ready. I fear the scenery will be rather of a makeshift order, but if the play succeeds, proper Bosbury scenery will be painted later on. I shall think of you so much on Sunday, darling; it is always a happy day, I think—a confirmation—for we all like to make a fresh start with fresh strength. I am so glad, too, that A. is to be confirmed with you. I wanted to have got for you two friends, two little pictures exactly alike, but

<sup>1</sup> Their childhood's nurse.

though they are by the same man—Muller—and the same subject you will see that I was not able to get duplicates. Will you choose the one you like best and give the other to A. with my love?"

This autumn a shower of stars was predicted on the night of the 15th of November. Edna Lyall tells an amusing experience in connection with this.

"Did you see any meteors? I set J.'s alarum on Wednesday for 4 A.M.—it plays a tune—and when the time came no power on earth would make it stop—but 'The Last Rose of Summer' went on and on till I thought the whole house would be aroused. As there was nothing to be seen, this would have been disastrous, and at last I had to wrap the clock in my fur cloak and shut it up in the wardrobe, where it played that maddening tune in muffled strains for half an hour!"

I conclude this chapter with Mr. A. S. Homewood's account of the origin and growth of the play *In Spite of All*. Having read *In the Golden Days*, the tenderness, the charm and the dramatic qualities of the book fascinated him, and he says:—

"I wrote to Edna Lyall and asked her if I might dramatise the book. Permission for this had, however, already been accorded in another quarter, and so my design had to be cancelled. From this time on, both in conversation and in our letters, the possibility of our writing a play in collaboration was discussed at intervals. Thus on 27th November, 1896, she wrote:—

"As to the play . . . the thought of attempting a

quite unknown branch of the writer's art rather appals me. And yet I want to try, and will try—only you must be much more than “sub-editor”.’

“But it was not until many more talks and letters had passed, and, in fact, above two years had elapsed, that something tangible began to evolve. On 9th February, 1899, she wrote to me, I being then in America, to the following effect:—

“‘I am thinking over what you said about writing a play. There is rather a pretty legend that I came across in Herefordshire. . . . How do you think that time<sup>1</sup> would do? Or has it been too much worked already? If I make something of it as a story would you dramatise it?’

“Getting an encouraging reply to this letter she appears to have set to work in earnest, for, less than a month later, I received the following:—

“‘I am thinking out my Royalist and Puritan story, but have not yet done more than the leading characters and the opening scene in very sketchy outline.’

“Here, then, was the real beginning of Edna Lyall's one effort as a dramatist. In April she wrote: ‘I have begun the story of our play, and long to talk it over with you’.

“In June I returned to England and arranged to go down to Eastbourne to hear the completed portion of the play. In July Edna Lyall wrote:—

“‘I have finished the play and sent off the last act for your criticism.’

<sup>1</sup> The Great Civil War.

"It made very interesting reading, I found, but it had been written in many detached scenes, giving it a loose and disjointed effect. On 25th July, 1899, she writes :—

"‘I laughed a little over your apologies for cutting out my “pet bits” of dialogue—pray, sir, how do you know my pet bits? Honestly, I don’t want to air my own views, but I think we must have a sentence or two which will show the best side of the Royalists in the Vicar and Lord Hopetoun, and the best side of the Puritans in Gabriel. . . . I accept, however, *almost* all your corrections and some of the suggestions very gratefully.’

"Thus the play was finished all but the title ; and this proved a matter of some difficulty. Quite a long list was made and each suggestion in turn had consideration. ‘Friendly Foes’ found most favour. ‘It more or less,’ Edna Lyall wrote, ‘fits in with the main thought of the play—unity in spite of differences—and has the merit of alliteration and brevity.’ But for some reason even this was rejected, possibly because the alternative title, ‘In Spite of All,’ which I then suggested, seemed more attractive.

"Several months intervened between the completion of the MS. and the final arrangements for the production of the play, but these being ultimately concluded rehearsals began, and in the end the piece was presented for the first time to an audience of the author’s fellow-townsmen at Eastbourne on the evening of 4th January, 1900. The play was interpreted by the

members of Mr. Ben Greet's Company, which was then paying a fortnight's visit to Eastbourne, and which, by arrangement with Mr. Greet, included, for this occasion, Edna Lyall's piece in the repertoire. Evidences of a highly successful play were many and of no uncertain character so far as this Eastbourne production was concerned. If possible, the favour extended towards the piece appeared to grow with the following evening's and Saturday's matinée performances. At all events, a further trial seemed justified, and it was very shortly decided to submit it to the higher judgment of a London audience, the date being arranged for the fifth day of the following month (February), and the place, Comedy Theatre. Meantime a single performance of 'In Spite of All' was given at the New Theatre, Cambridge.

"The production of the Comedy Theatre took place in the afternoon of 5th February, 1900, the arrangement being that the piece should be presented for a fortnight—six matinées the first week and six evening performances during the week following. . . . In London the play was not sufficiently successful to justify its continuance in the bill after the completion of the pre-arranged twelve performances ; it was therefore withdrawn at the end of the fortnight.

"But it may be noted here a particularly unfortunate time was lighted on for the London production. It was perhaps the very blackest period of disaster during the whole history of the South African War ; and, moreover, London's climatic conditions had ren-

dered locomotion irksome, to use a mild expression—streets more than ankle deep in slush and sodden, muddy snow were more than enough to damp the most ardent playgoer's intentions. Naturally enough, after all her labours and the promising attitude of the local audience, Edna Lyall was downcast over the aloofness of the London public ; but her spirit was by no means crushed, and her care was more for the loss of what success might have meant for all of us who were concerned in the play's production than for herself. Let me illustrate this with a quotation from a letter written on 21st February, 1900, in which she wrote :—

“ ‘ I return the pictures and also the bundle of reviews. These latter I swallowed at a gulp last night, as one takes any specially detestable dose ! and at the end came the jam of the childish days in the shape of those really nice bits of appreciation of you and Miss Mathieson as Gabriel and Hilary.’

“ ‘ Never of much physical strength, the combination of excitement and foul weather laid Edna Lyall under the doctor's hands (an unfortunately frequent experience), but, happily, not for long, for after a few days in bed she wrote :—

“ ‘ I am mending, but still kept a prisoner on account of a silly temperature which will exalt itself unduly. In other respects the much-pilloried playwright is progressing, and solaces herself with knitting for the sick and wounded—that being her feminine equivalent for the solace of a pipe !’

“ And in the same letter :—

“ ‘ I had a good laugh . . . over the (otherwise very good) critique which said it would not tell the very interesting plot, as no doubt readers knew it from the novel ! ’

“ The author’s note appended to the novel which was *afterwards* written (with the same title as the play) became necessary owing to the very frequent mistakes, of which the one quoted above is a sample.

“ I cannot, I think, more fitly conclude this account than by leaving the play, which begat the novel, on the threshold of that novel, and the following extract from a letter dated 19th February, 1900, will join up the two :—

“ ‘ My only trouble is to think of all the labour you have had over the play ; and I am very sorry to think that Mr. Greet has had such a bad investment. It’s much worse for him than for me, for of course there is a great deal of pleasure and interest in merely seeing one’s first play—so different to unpacking your first book. I am in great spirits, for the doctor has just been and I may get up. To-morrow, if all is well, I shall begin the novel—already I have scribbled down a bit of the first chapter in the rough.’ ”

## CHAPTER XI.

DISAPPOINTMENT AND SORROW—1900, 1901.

“When ae door steeks”—Letter to Miss Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler—Caterham—The New Forest—Keswick—*In Spite of All*—Plymouth—Bosbury—Lady Henry Somerset—G. F. Watts—The Wye—A Friends’ meeting—Wales—Suffolk—Sorrow—*The Burges Letters*.



## CHAPTER XI.

### DISAPPOINTMENT AND SORROW—1900, 1901.

“The lifelong habit of direct and most simple communion with the Unseen came to his aid.”—*In Spite of All*.

MR. A. S. HOMEWOOD has told how Edna Lyall's play, *In Spite of All*, was performed in January, 1900, at Eastbourne. She went both nights and to the matinée, taking many friends, and then, as usual after any extra fatigue or excitement, spent several days in bed, and said pathetically: “What wouldn't I give for a tougher physique!”

But she recovered in time to go up to town the next month for the production of the play at the Comedy Theatre.

How well I remember that 5th of February when in the morning, as we drew nearer to London, the darkness increased, and the snow came down thickly, softly, but surely, and we looked at each other in dismay, wondering how we should get about in such wintry weather. However, by the time we arrived at Victoria it had cleared off a little, and we went to Westminster Abbey and joined in the Intercession Service held daily at that time for the soldiers in South Africa and their friends. Afterwards we walked round and

visited Mr. Gladstone's grave and the busts of Stanley, Maurice and Kingsley, and coming out stood by Cromwell's statue before lunching and walking across St. James's Park to the Comedy Theatre—in time for the matinée. It was a morning of hero-worship, and perhaps helped to brace Edna Lyall for the disappointment which was to come, but which could not quench the spirit which turned every seeming failure into success by using it as a stepping-stone to higher things.

She stayed in London with friends for the week, and wrote on the Thursday :—

“We have got a very good notice in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, telegraphed down by their special. But London *slaughters* us—the house yesterday was woefully empty, and I was awfully depressed and so were the Ben Greet Company. They are so nice that it makes me regret the failure more. I had to go to bed with racking headache at six, but got up in my usual paradox queer fashion this morning feeling a new creature after a real night's sound sleep.”

To another friend she writes of the critics on her play :—

“They say it's not ‘risky’ enough for London—‘There is nothing in it that need raise a blush on the cheek of a parson’—‘A nice play to take young girls to,’ and so forth. Well, one can't serve God and Mammon, and on the whole I would be a good deal ashamed of myself if I *had* pleased men of that stamp. Where it hurts one is that of course the Ben Greet

Company, who have worked so well and taken so much trouble, are all involved in the failure. They do act so well—specially the hero and heroine and the two villains. I long for you to see them.”

In connection with this subject may be quoted an extract from a letter she had written some years before this.

“Artists of all sorts are ‘servants of the public,’ and I don’t see why we all—actors, novelists, dramatists, etc.—should not have as high a standard as old Cervantes, who said: ‘Could I by any means suppose that these novels would excite one evil thought or desire in those who read them, I would rather cut off the hand with which I write than give them to the people’.”

At the end of that week of disappointment in London Edna Lyall returned home, but a severe chill drove her again to bed, where the doctor kept her for some days. As soon as she was able to write she began the novel which bears the name of the play, and in February wrote to a friend:—

‘I will try and take your advice and not work too hard at the next novel. This morning Mr. Blackett has made me a capital offer for it, though I, of course, told him what a failure the play had been, and he must have seen for himself by the papers. Evidently he doesn’t think this will affect the sale of the novel or he would not offer what he does; he puts everything down to the war, and says that business everywhere is almost at a standstill.’

Later, when the book came out, she wrote to Mr. Homewood :—

“ It was owing to you and my brother that I straightway turned the play, when it failed, into a novel.”

Hence the motto on the dedication page in the book :—

“ When ae door steeks, anither opens.”

The writing of this story was but slow as Edna Lyall was far from well, and in March had to give in completely, becoming really ill. When she was getting better she wrote to Mr. Homewood :—

“ It makes just all the difference to have sunshine—even in bed—and I am getting on well and soon going to write to Liberty’s to order a tea-gown! I wonder if men order new coats when they feel better?”

During this convalescence she read *The Farringtons*, and then wrote to Miss Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, knowing from personal experience the pleasure of receiving appreciation, for, as she said to a friend once, “ Doesn’t one often envy the worker who can see . . . a useful and visible result of his work? Actors and novelists have to take it on trust that their work has helped.”

Miss Fowler has kindly allowed the letter to be inserted.

“ 6 COLLEGE ROAD, EASTBOURNE,

“ 27th April, 1900.

“ DEAR MADAM,

“ I have some hesitation in adding another letter to the number you are sure to receive, but I

have so very much enjoyed *The Farringdons*, and want just to thank you most heartily for it.

“For two months I have been ill in bed, owing to the cold and the troubles of this sad winter.

“But last Sunday the warm weather and *The Farringdons* came in together, and I was able to sit out of doors and revel in both. We have all of us enjoyed your other books, but this seems to me even better than the earlier ones—its humour is delightful, its heroine most thoroughly human, and I found it excellent Sunday reading for one cut off for the time from Church services—the sort of book that really gives one a lift on the uphill road. I shall look forward eagerly to the publication of your next book. With all best wishes and warm congratulations,

“Yours sincerely,

“ELLEN BAYLY,

“‘Edna Lyall’.”

Towards the end of April she was able to get out again in a bath-chair, and then went to recruit at Caterham, where at first it was too cold and windy for her to go even down to the wood, which she was longing to see carpeted with bluebells, and she says :—

“As yet I don’t seem to have brains or strength enough for Gabriel (the hero of ‘In Spite of All’), but hope they will arrive before long. . . . Coming out of convalescence is always difficult, and one is apt to be worried by small things. I have written very

little of Gabriel, but have been chiefly looking up Laud and Puritans on the other side."

But the weather changed, and she describes her first country walk.

"We have had two beautiful days, and on Saturday I had quite a long ramble, first through a lovely beech wood, then—fired by a distant glimpse of the old Canterbury Pilgrims' Way—I proved my recovery by scrambling up a bank and creeping through a barbed-wire fence, where one's head would just pass! and this led into some glorious fields bounded by a wood which was quite near to me. One part looked just like the nave of a Cathedral, the ground of it one great sheet of bluebells. I longed for a painter to paint it."

In January she had joined the South African Conciliation Committee, and wrote from Caterham to Mrs. Bradby—a cousin—who was holding a drawing-room meeting in London to further the cause:—

"28th May, 1900.

"MY DEAR COUSIN,

"I am more sorry than I can tell you not to be able to attend any of the Conciliation meetings, but my doctors absolutely forbid anything of the sort. You have my warmest sympathy, and the plan of drawing-room meetings seems to me specially good, for though a large public meeting may be very thrilling, it is easier in a home for us to get into touch with each other. It is not only, I think, the learning of the [real] facts about the South African question that

we need—though this no doubt is the main thing—but we want to hearten each other, and so get practical proof that although the nation seems mad with the lust of fighting, and Jingoism is mistaken for patriotism, and our birthright of free speech is in grave peril, there is nevertheless a large minority anxious so to speak and so to do ‘as they shall be judged by the law of liberty’. Those who try to be peacemakers must expect hard times, and, as Fanny Kemble wrote, ‘Those who are alone must learn to be lonely’. But the bitterness of it is gone when we realise that no word spoken on behalf of peace and brotherliness can be wasted; no honest endeavour to fight against the domineering, hectoring spirit of the day can really fail; no effort to promote sure justice and broad-hearted love of humanity can in the end be conquered by that spurious patriotism whose weapons are abuse and lies.

“With all best wishes for the success of your meeting,

“Yours most sincerely,

“A. E. BAYLY;

“‘Edna Lyall’.”

For many years it had been Edna Lyall’s custom to take the nurse of her childhood—who has been spoken of in Chapter I.—for a holiday into the country some time during the spring or early summer.

This year they went to the Isle of Wight—a party of five—and then on to the New Forest, where I joined them, and we stayed at Emery Down, just on

the edge of the wood, in which we would all sit for hours, Edna Lyall and her friends sketching or working while "Emma" read aloud.

After visiting her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Homewood, in their country home near Haslemere, Miss Bayly returned to Eastbourne practically well but obliged to be careful and lead a very quiet life. She was now at work on the new book, and reading all she could get hold of that bore on the times and on Archbishop Laud and Falkland and other historical characters who come into this story. In July she writes to Mr. Homewood in reference to the Peace Conference :—

"It is very disappointing to see so little result at present from the Peace Conference. But I still believe that, in the future, arbitration will gradually be more and more often resorted to. I don't altogether hold with what you say as to man always resisting to teeth and claws when provoked by a rival as long as he is partly animal. You 'whacked' your brother with the back of a brush when you were miserable and found a delightful relief as a child, and I brushed my cousin's arm with the bristle side of the brush in a fury when we quarrelled as children, but we have both learnt to mend our ways since we grew up! Why is the world always to remain so childish? I can see that half-civilised beings like the Boxers must be resisted by force just as you must sometimes resist a burglar by force or a lunatic, but that two civilised and Christian nations should murder each other and each ask God to bless their armies seems to me ap-



palling. More and more (in that respect) the Quakers seem to me the most logical Christians that we have. I wonder what the world might now have been like if from the first all had taken up that position? However, the more practical 'wonder' is 'what can we do to help peace on her way and to work against present-day Jingoism?' "

This year the family holiday was spent at Keswick, from where Edna Lyall writes :—

"We are having such a glorious time—very hot, but *such* views. We boat a great deal. . . . I lunched with the Rawnsleys on Sunday and met a granddaughter of Southey's, and to-morrow am to go there to tea to meet the Bishop of London. I hope he isn't alarming! We have had endless picnics—in fact almost every day we start off at 10, and come back about 4.30, taking sandwiches with us. I am sketching a lot—dreadful attempts, but it teaches me to enjoy more and also refreshes one's brain. I am reading a very interesting *Life of Falkland* which Canon Rawnsley lent me, also Mrs. Walford's *Archdeacon*, and Gabriel, though not written except on wet days, is developing. I am nicely well . . . and very happy, and hope you are the same."

Another letter says :—

"It has been a most delightful holiday altogether, and with much lovely weather and plenty of fun to keep us going in the rain. On Monday eleven of us are going to see a Ben Greet Company in the 'White Heather'. There is quite a good room here close to

the Greta, and when you come out on to the little terrace after the performance it seems just like being at the 'Three Kings' at Bâle with the Rhine rushing past. Do you know that possibly Gabriel may come out in serial form next year after all? It is not quite settled yet."

Evidently the idea was opposed, for the next letter to the same friend says :—

"I think on the whole it would have worried me more to lose the chance of earning £1,000 (and possibly more if we can serialise in the United States). . . . This will more than recoup my loss over the play. . . . You see of two worries one must choose the least, and I shall try to live very quietly otherwise and avoid 'At Homes' and all unnecessary fatigues—only taking really *bonâ-fide* 'recreations'."

With her usual desire for accuracy of detail, she writes to her niece at Bosbury in reference to the book :—

"If it would not trouble you, and if you happen to meet Mr. Michael Hopton, or any one likely to know, I wonder whether you would find out for me in what building Archbishop Laud's visitation was probably held. Webb in his *Civil War of Herefordshire*, i., 14, says that Laud was at Hereford in 1637, and in Baines' *Life of Laud* he writes : 'The inherent powers of the See of Canterbury are so great that by making a metropolitanical visitation of the dioceses of his Suffragans, their jurisdiction and that of their Archdeacons, officials, etc., is suspended for the time. The Archbishop and

his Vicar-General and subordinates supply the place of the Ordinary—these powers Laud set in motion . . . at Lincoln, Hereford, Worcester,' etc., etc. I *believe* somewhere I saw that the visitation was held at Hereford in the Archdeacon's Court, but can't feel certain. Does Mr. Hopton know? And whereabouts in Hereford is the Archdeacon's Court? And what is it like?

"Also, can you tell me whether in the middle of the seventeenth century the Bishop's country house at Whitbourne had a private chapel, and if it is known what the house was like. Also, what direction Whitbourne is in—which road would you take to it from Hereford? It is a shame to bother you with so many questions! I have been reading a very interesting book, the *Life of Falkland*, by the author of the *Life of Sir Kenelm Digby*, and published by Longmans. I think it would interest you. He must have been one of the most delightful of the Royalists."

In October Edna Lyall wrote to Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner acknowledging a pamphlet which she had sent her on "The Indian Famine".

"Your pamphlet is splendid, and must stir all who read it to do something to help. I am ashamed of myself for not having been roused long before, and thank you, dear friend, for poking me up. I think one gets into a sort of down-hearted way of thinking some evils so gigantic that it is useless to struggle—but that is of course a shameful and weak state to fall into when we have all of us determined and many of

us vowed to fight evil untiringly. Will you send for me (but under the name of 'a reader of your pamphlet' only) the enclosed £10, and if we may have seventy copies we will try to distribute them carefully.

"You sound tired, dear—do take care of yourself. I expect, as you say, you have been too busy, but don't add 'Cui Bono'—remember your other motto, 'I labour, I hope'. And this pamphlet is surely the very work your father would be so glad for you to have done. We had a nice holiday at Keswick, and then I paid a visit or two in Norfolk and Suffolk. . . . I am working away at *In Spite of All* as a novel. It is after all to come out serially—rather against my wish, but *The Christian World* gave terms for its serial use that it seemed wrong to refuse. I hope, however, you will wait to read it till I can send it you in volume form—weekly scraps to my mind ruin any story. Have you read Merriman's *Isle of Unrest*? I hear it is very good, and he is always refreshing."

This autumn Miss Bayly went up to town once or twice for her favourite recreation of the theatre, and saw "The Message from Mars" and "Colonel Cromwell," which "was most enjoyable". One day, having some time to spare, she went into the National Portrait Gallery, and says:—

"I had a quiet but dullish time at the National Portrait Gallery studying seventeenth-century folk, but they hadn't nearly all I had hoped to meet—actually no Falkland."

The following letter was written to a minister of a Presbyterian Church, and shows Edna Lyall's catholicity of feeling in regard to different Churches :—

"I was at your church this morning, and feel that I must write and thank you for the great help you gave me. It was not only that your sermon threw light on the very passage that had been perplexing me for the last few days, but that the whole service was such a refreshment. It made me think of a drive we took the other day round Bassenthwaite Lake, which opened up to us an entirely new aspect of Skiddaw—a mountain we know so well from the Derwentwater side, but which was so much more varied than I had ever dreamt. From your exquisite little parable to the children . . . I am sure you will understand that one can be loyal to one's own special branch of the Universal Church, yet welcome teaching from all quarters."

This winter—1900—Edna Lyall had some further correspondence with Mr. C. E. Maurice with reference to the Concentration Camps in South Africa, and in one letter she says :—

"I fear it is out of the question to attempt a working party in Eastbourne, where literally I only know three people who share our views on the South African War."

And again :—

"By all means use my name in any way that will help the proposed scheme of relief. Although regular working parties here are not practicable, I have thought of a way of getting some clothes made, and shall hope

to send parcels to Mrs. McKail and Miss E. D. Bradby. I am very glad the authorities permit the things to be sent."

Miss Bayly interested her Sunday class in this work, and also had some clothes made, giving work to those in need of employment, so that she was able to send up large parcels to London; and later one of the three friends in sympathy with her found it possible to have two working parties, at which Edna Lyall read aloud, and refers to them afterwards in writing to a friend, thus:—

"I can testify to the mixed character of the working parties here, for we had strong Peace Advocates and equally strong War Advocates sitting side by side making clothes for the Boer women and children, and thought it well to keep an amusing book in reading the whole time lest they should begin to argue!"

In November she wrote to Mr. Homewood, who was on tour in America:—

"Yesterday, to my amusement, I had a long telegram asking me to send to the *New York Journal* a message representing my hopes for the new century, and enclosing a form prepaid for thirty-eight words not including the address. Fancy getting the hopes for a hundred years into thirty-eight words, with the need of sending off the telegram without delay! You will perhaps see the result in the *New York Journal* for New Year's Day if you happen to come across it."

Another time, referring to the new century, Edna Lyall wrote:—

"In some ways I think the problem of the new century will be how to make leisure for thought of any kind. There seems always something to be done, or written, or books that you *must* read, or people you must see, and if I find it is so in this quiet part of the world, it must be a thousand times more difficult for you. I wonder what the remedy is?"

She had lent Mr. Homewood some small volumes of Thackeray's, and in reply to his fear of damaging them in any way, says :—

"You say you hope you won't scratch or spoil the Thackerays. Please don't let them be any trouble. They are sure to get a little knocked about in travelling, and I shall like them the better for having been on tour. If there is a detestable thing it is an unused book kept to look ornamental on a shelf."

In many letters at this time Edna Lyall refers to the war and her longings for peace, saying :—

"Personally, as you know, I think we lost an opportunity by not offering some reasonable terms directly Pretoria was taken, for anything but a war of defence is to my semi-quaker mind wrong. But the whole question is fearfully complicated, and one can only try to do a little to relieve the distress, and hope for better times."

Writing in January, 1901, to Mrs. Bonner, she again speaks of the war.

"Just a little line of love to greet you to-morrow with the flowers I hope to be able, as usual, to send in memory of your father. They tell me there is an

enormous demand for them, so if they fail to arrive to-morrow you will understand that it is not that I forget, and that they will come a little later. I was so delighted to hear of the splendid success of your pamphlet in aid of the Indian Famine Fund, all the more so because I can guess that in any work for India you feel that you are doing just what Mr. Bradlaugh would like. . . .

“ I am busy still with *In Spite of All* in its novel form, and have been much enjoying the study of Falkland's character. The *Whitelocks Memorials* you so kindly gave me is constantly proving useful. I wonder when this unhappy war is coming to an end; it is very hard to keep resolutely hopeful. I have had some interesting correspondence lately with a Quaker on the question of war. At the back of my mind I have a lurking conviction that war of any sort is wrong, yet when one comes to face a practical instance it seems to me that war in defence of our national rights is justifiable. The Quaker position is the strongest, but I don't seem able to reach it yet—tho' I am not sure that your Secularist maxim, ‘Conscience is higher than consequences,’ does not meet the difficulty and prove the Quaker theory workable. I wish you would tell me just what you think.”

The correspondence spoken of in this letter on the question of war was with Mr. J. J. Green, of Tunbridge Wells, with whom she had already exchanged letters whilst writing *Hope the Hermit*.

When *In Spite of All* came out in *The Christian*



*World* on 3rd January, 1901, Mr. Green—being a descendant of the Harfords, one member of which Herefordshire family Edna Lyall had taken for the hero of the book—promptly wrote to her on the subject, giving several further details which she was able to introduce later. This letter pleased her very much, and she replied :—

“ I am so very much interested in what you kindly wrote to me about the Harfords. . . . I can't tell you how much I am interested in thus coming across some of their descendants—they have become such very real people to me. With your permission I will quote the extract you kindly send me in the author's note when the story is published in book form. I am still writing, and am only about half-way through the book, so shall no doubt be able to introduce that amusing story about the Court Jester and Dr. Laud. The study of Falkland's character has been very fascinating to me ; his efforts for peace make him specially congenial to one just now. . . . For all the brave sufferings of the Friends in the cause of peace I daily feel more grateful. We all of us want to learn of you in this matter, and in your scrupulous love of truth and carefulness in talk,” etc.

In answer to Mr. Green's reply to this, she wrote again :—

“ Thank you so very much for the copy of *Woolman's Journal* ; I had long wished to read it. . . .

“ I cannot as yet quite get to the position held by the Friends that *all* war is wrong. For instance,

in the seventeenth-century struggle I cannot yet see that anything remained for the Parliamentary party but to fight for the civil rights and the religious freedom which the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury sought to rob them of. I can see the beauty of Lord Falkland's character, and feel in strong sympathy with his longing for peace; but when all attempts at a peaceful solution had been defeated by the utter untrustworthiness of the King, I cannot as yet see that the use of force in that instance was avoidable. Again, though duelling is no doubt wrong, yet if a man saw a villain trying fatally to injure his wife or child, surely he would be right in such a case to fight him, even—if necessary to their protection—to kill him?

"I am with you heart and soul in longing to see arbitration supersede war, but in special cases there seems to me a difficulty. I think the author of *Quaker Strongholds* admits that force is sometimes unavoidable; but then if once you admit exceptions I fear we shall never grow strong, for it is easy to deceive oneself, and no doubt many thought this South African War quite just and quite unavoidable, not fairly studying all that had led up to it. I do most heartily long to serve the cause of peace by this new story, and shall be very grateful for any light or help you can give me as to your feeling in regard to the great Civil War. The Harford pedigree interested me immensely, and I shall be able to give my hero his right ancestors, thanks to your kind loan."

Here follow more details as to the family of the Harfords, and the letter concludes :—

“I do not think the Daniel Bayly you mention is in our copy of the Bayly pedigree. The Baylys were originally, I have heard, Huguenots, and one or two French names appear in the list, also some Flemish ones. My great-grandmother was named Hanna Brabant,” etc.

The next letter was written to Mr. Homewood who was still in America.

“Your letter reached me on the day of the Queen’s death ; the feeling over here is wonderful. Everything seems to have stopped, and the suddenness of it seems overpowering.”

The postscript to this letter says :—

“Just back from the Town Hall, where from the balcony King Edward VII. was proclaimed. Such a crowd ! and a curious Punch-and-Judy-like effect as the Mayor with his mace, the Town Clerk in his barrister’s wig, the Vicar in a tall hat, and sundry officials in gorgeous array stood out above the porch. Then a trumpeter sounded a blast to the north, south and east, whereupon a wire-haired terrier began to howl dismally. After that the Mayor read the Proclamation, the band struck up the National Anthem and we all sang. Then after cheers the people dispersed. So the old order changes. I think the dear old Queen is well out of all the troubles that lie before us.”

In another letter in March she writes to Mr. Green :—

"Thank you so much for the most interesting pamphlet on 'War'. I have read it three times, and each time like it better. You have put the case so fully and carefully. I enclose postage stamps and should be glad to have twelve copies for distribution. After thinking over the matter for a long while, I am able to agree with the Quaker view of this question, though, as I told you, I hesitated long as to giving up even defensive war, and clung to the notion that at any rate our own great Civil War was justifiable. The poem by Lowell always struck me as wonderfully helpful and straightforward, and it was delightful to see it quoted.

"A few days ago at the request of Mr. Atkins, the editor of the *Young Man*, I wrote a letter on a striking article against 'Militarism' which is shortly to appear in that paper, and I took the liberty of quoting some of Mr. Richard's speech which you lent me, and which I now return with very many thanks. It is just possible that during April I may be staying with some friends at Tunbridge Wells, and if so I should like very much to call on you and Mrs. Green. I am thinking of ending my story *In Spite of All* about the year 1670, when Gabriel, who has become a physician, finally meets with his death from the effects of gaol fever which he contracts while visiting the imprisoned Quakers in one of the London gaols. Can you tell me which prison they were chiefly confined in? Whether any large numbers were imprisoned about that time, and under what conditions? It

will only be a short final chapter, just referring to these facts, but I want him to die as a peace hero."

Through the spring Edna Lyall was constantly ailing and spent many a day in bed—often suffering from headache or neuralgia ; but she had wonderful vitality, and the next day would be up and at work again. She kept up until March, when some of the children had German measles, and again influenza was rife. After helping to nurse the invalids she failed herself, and one day wrote the following note :—

"I fear there is no doubt that I'm in for 'flu,' as my stupid temperature runs up nightly and the doctors say 'bed, bed, bed'—their everlasting old remedy for me. But I'm not bad—only tired, and ordered to feed up and *drink champagne* ! Think of that after a year's teetotalising."

On the 10th of April she wrote :—

"*In Spite of All* is nearly finished—in fact I have left Gabriel till to-morrow with the rope round his neck !"

And two days later :—

"*In Spite of All* is really finished. I both began and ended writing it in bed."

At the end of April she wrote another letter to Mr. Green asking him if she might mention his help as to details of her hero's family in the author's note of *In Spite of All*, and requesting his leave to quote at the head of one of the chapters a passage about duelling and war from his pamphlet on those subjects.

A letter on the same subject, to another friend, though written three months later, fits in well here.

“ I am rather grieved to find you are an upholder of the war. I have read steadily on both sides throughout the whole time, and think that the faults of both Boers and British were very grave ; but more and more it grows clear to me that war altogether is disloyalty to Christ, and utterly opposed to His character and teaching. So on that point the Quaker position seems to me the only satisfactory one. In case you have not seen it I send you Methuen's *Peace or War in South Africa*, which seems to me more moderate and sensible than anything that has yet appeared.”

Towards the end of May, Edna Lyall was sufficiently recovered to enable her to go to Plymouth with a friend to stay with some relations. She writes of the journey to her aunt :—

“ We managed the journey most comfortably on Wednesday, the doctor saying I was just well enough. The weather was perfect ; a friendly guard kept me room enough to lie down from Paddington to Plymouth, and a lady in the train quite ‘ mothered ’ me, insisting on tucking me up, getting me tea, and generally looking after me.

“ Miss C. is delighted to be in Devonshire, and it is certainly looking its very loveliest. I promised the doctor to spend most of the first day in bed and all in my room, but am now (5 o'clock) cosily sitting in a granny chair with open window enjoying a lovely chestnut tree in full blossom and a most

delicious air. We hope in June to go on to Bosbury. . . . We are much enjoying *Phillips Brooks' Life*. Have you read it yet? Miss C. has been reading me *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, and now we are deep in *Emma*, to be followed by *Penelope's Adventures in Ireland* which has just been given me.'

To another friend she writes a few days later :—

"Such thanks for all your letters—I did enjoy them and like to realise all your doings. You would laugh to see the greedy way in which I now devour bread and butter, etc., etc., though I still rather envy vegetarians. We have had such lovely weather and only hope it does not mean to turn wet. But there was rain in the night, and to-day we are glad to have a little fire and open windows."

After this visit, Emma Willis, her nurse, and another friend joined Miss Bayly, and they went to Bosbury to stay with her brother at the vicarage, and, as she said, "Certainly, Herefordshire in early June is hard to beat". She wrote from there of the village which she peopled with the characters of her imagination, and also described a visit to Eastnor where she met Lady Henry Somerset, who promised her an introduction to Watts the artist, and said she would ask him to show her "The Happy Warrior" and the other pictures in his own house.

Miss Bayly was always planning delights for other people—and it was her greatest pleasure in life to give pleasure—so now when she was going up the Wye with "Emma" and her friend, she invited her niece and a

young friend staying at the vicarage to join them, and they all went a merry party to Symonds Yat and Tintern, etc., and had the best of good times.

To a friend, whose sister at this time was very ill and often delirious, Edna Lyall writes with much sympathy, and says she is glad that the girl's mother is not allowed to do much of the actual nursing.

"Delirium is so dreadful to watch for those who really belong, and takes less out of the trained nurse, who can realise more that the patient is probably not really feeling what is said. It used to hurt [my sister] so dreadfully that I was always longing and praying for death, but that is a feeling that *never* really came to me ; on the contrary, I have a strong desire always for life and health, and the power to go on working."

During a short visit to Tunbridge Wells this summer she had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Green, and on Sunday she went, as often before when opportunity offered, to the Friends' Meeting House, and writes of it :—

"This morning I went to a Quaker's meeting. It was very good and most restful, but even more silent than most I have been to. They are wise in not making them too long—never apparently more than an hour. I doubt if one could keep more than that time in communion while we are 'in the flesh,' except perhaps a few great saints. But it certainly is curious that, in the peaceful atmosphere of a Friends' meeting, wandering thoughts don't come at all in the same



way as at other times. . . . Yesterday we heard of the death of . . . and we can only feel thankful for him to be free. I wonder what a 'spiritual body' is like. Doesn't it seem strange that we live on contentedly and know so *very* little? The passing away of one we have known seems to me like a momentary glance through a telescope; it gives a faint realisation of the vastness that lies beyond our little world, and a longing to know more of what we instinctively feel belongs to us. If I were a parson I would preach a course of sermons on 'Spiritual Patriotism'!"

To Mr. Green she wrote of the meeting, it was "most restful and helpful, and I *like* the silences".

In August she wrote to him from Capel Curig:—

"Thank you so much for the book, which I shall read with great interest. I thoroughly enjoyed our stay at Tunbridge Wells, but as far as health goes, I don't think that places affect me much. Rest and quiet and an outdoor life *anywhere* seem always to do me good. I can quite imagine how you must enjoy your researches in the old parish registers, and quite agree with you in finding it often very refreshing to meet people with whose views one cannot sympathise, but whose personality attracts one. It helps one to realise that real spiritual kinship is the true and lasting thing, while *opinions* are transitory. We are delighted with the beautiful air of Capel Curig. It is real mountain—almost Swiss—and though our quarters are rather small, it is a great thing to be

in the heart of this lovely scenery, and we hope to get plenty of sketching."

Unfortunately it proved a very wet summer, and she writes later of the weather as "deplorable ; it has rained *every* day except the first and sometimes *all* day and all night ! Consequently feverish chills have abounded," she herself not having escaped. Of books she says :—

" I am reading Hall Caine's *Eternal City*. It is very interesting. Have you seen it ? Also, at last, I have finished the second volume of *Phillips Brooks' Life* ; horribly put together as it is, it has been very enjoyable, as giving one a good deal of his own writing. What a giant he was in all senses of the word."

After Wales, Miss Bayly went to Farnham, and from there spent a day in the country with some friends who lived in a little cottage and did everything for themselves, and then wrote to them :—

" Just a little line to thank you so much for my happy day. It is a long time since I have enjoyed anything so much, and I have brought away quite a series of mind pictures of you both and your dear little home. I am sure there will be no servants in the ' many mansions,' or, rather, that we shall all serve each other ; and certainly we shall want gardens and something equivalent to ling-covered hills and fir trees. Perhaps —— will crave for shears ; I am sure he is trimming up the edges or the hedges this morning. . . . How difficult it is to write to two people at

once ; one needs stage directions in brackets ! That reminds me that I never answered your suggestion of trying to write another play. I wish I could, but at present don't seem to want to express anything either through a play or a novel ; one can do nothing until the strong desire to depict something comes, and when it has come write you must. Have you any schemes for writing ? . . . I hope you have, if only to pass the time. What a lucky thing it is that we can all of us get so much enjoyment out of the mere trying to do things."

In September Edna Lyall went once more to Badmondfield, and enjoyed some sketching whilst sitting in the punt on the moat by the "Apple Walk" to make a picture of the garden which she has thus described in *In the Golden Days*: "At the end is the pigeon cote with its red-tiled roof and weather-vane . . . the prettiest part of the moat is just in this place. . . . It takes a great sweeping curve just beyond the pigeon cote, and on the further bank the fir trees are closer and taller than elsewhere, and other trees mingle with them"—and this was the subject of her sketch. If, hereafter, we are allowed to revisit old haunts and scenes, I fancy that was not Edna Lyall's "last visit" as we say now to the dear old house and garden she loved so well.

From there she went to Godmanchester, and wrote:—

"Godmanchester is a most picturesque place to my mind, and some of the houses and gardens—especially one called the Island House—really fascinating. Such

a story-book-like garden by the river, and wonderful old carving in the house."

She then went on to Caterham, where she was looking forward to having a fortnight's rest before going home to work, but she had been there little more than a week when sad news from home reached her of the serious illness of a little niece, and, a few days after, of her death. Naturally, Edna Lyall longed to be there, but thought it best to stay on at Caterham for fear of involving her sister in fresh anxiety and nursing. She waited with trunks ready to be packed in a moment, but "the 'leading' was so emphatically in the 'stand-still' line that I could not have felt it right to come," she wrote, and added:—

"Head very bad yesterday; better to-day. . . . I am quite able to smile with joy and happiness at the thought of our dear little one's delight in her real lasting home, of which the one here was—thanks to her sweetness very greatly—a faint likeness."

To another friend she said:—

"Now, as you say, we can think of her with the dignity which must come to those who no longer see as in a mirror darkly but 'face to face'! It is *wonderful* to try to imagine all that must now be quite clear to her. I am sending you a poem written by a Quaker—it has been a comfort to me. . . . We must all of us struggle harder to 'dwell in love,' which is to dwell in God, and in that way, as the writer says in the last verse, to realise how near our dear ones still are to us. Do you know the hymn for Absent Friends

(595 in 'Ancient and Modern')? It has always been a help to me."

This sorrow struck at the very root of her life and she was never the same after it. Her own loss was great, for the little niece and god-daughter had been a real friend and companion to her in many special ways, as she says in a letter to Mrs. Bonner:—

"Since we were both delicate and unable to go out in the evening, it had been a regular custom with us to plan Christmas presents on Sunday evenings when the others were at church."

And they had talked over the book of Edna Lyall's story of her childhood, which came out afterwards as *The Burges Letters*. But she would not dwell on her own sorrow and seldom spoke of it, the others were her chief thought and how to lighten the trial for her sister, whose patient grief, she said, was almost more than she could bear to see, adding: "If one did not know that the suffering was in some way working out God's will and the greater good of all, I don't know how one could live. One thing is clear from the very first, that bereavement does bring out in a wonderful way the kindness of all one's friends and neighbours. Even strangers have gone out of their way to show such great sympathy and thoughtfulness. To-morrow we have what I count little J.'s Christmas party for the Workhouse children, and the preparing it has kept us busy and happy to-day and has helped our small people through this dismal weather."

"I don't quite know how we shall get through the

day this year," she wrote to another friend at Christmas time, "but I want very much to spend the money I should have spent on her on other children, and should like C. to be one of them. So will you let me know of anything he would like?"

She fully experienced what she had written some years before:—

"However we dread and shrink from sorrow beforehand, when it comes we find—sooner or later—that it does bind us all closer together in one great family."

And:—

"Religion means to me 'that which binds us to God and to each other' and makes trouble bearable."

Early in this year Edna Lyall had met at an "At Home" a clergyman whose conversation had interested her very much. He had amused her with an original idea about middle age, which she determined to quote in the next novel.

In her heroine's words: "'Middle age,' said one of the best men I ever knew, 'is the Clapham Junction of life,' and I never walk through those dim subterranean passages with their puzzling directions and their hurrying, jostling travellers without thinking of his simile. But when you come up out of that rabbit-warren and take your place in the new train and settle down peacefully for the fresh bit of your journey, there comes the restfulness of contrast, and you wonder you were so silly as to be chafed and worried by trifles and to get in a panic lest you should miss your train after

all. There's just the same peacefulness in the autumn of life when once you calmly make up your mind to it, and as some poet sings :—

There's gladness in remembrance."

The thought of middle age was much in her mind, and she says in a letter to a friend :—

"I think one of the great delights of middle age is the way in which life broadens out in all kinds of unlooked-for ways, and when one's own life would otherwise be a trifle prosaic, other people's hopes and joys come and fill up the gap most refreshingly."

In November, hearing that Mr. T., the clergyman mentioned above, was again in Eastbourne, Edna Lyall wrote asking him to come and see her, saying no doubt he had heard of their great sorrow in the death of her little niece, and that a talk with him would be a great help to her. After this visit she wrote him the following letter :—

"6 COLLEGE ROAD, EASTBOURNE,

"11th November, 1901.

"DEAR MR. T.,

"Since seeing you I have been laid up for a few days with a chill, but am now well again, and should be only too delighted to meet you once more if you can spare me a little time. Could you come on Tuesday about three o'clock?

"You were a great comfort to me, and I am so glad Mrs. T. has that same hope as to the future, and like her way of putting it, 'the perfected baby spirit' and

‘the perfected child spirit’. Even as a girl of sixteen I never could bear Longfellow’s verse—

Not as a child shall we again behold her.

To me—and I fancy to most women—Heaven would be incomplete without children. What a wonderful bit that is in the *Paradiso*, where Dante is taught that though there are different degrees of knowledge in the future life, yet Heaven is perfect for each one because they couldn’t desire anything but God’s will.

“Will you thank your daughter very much for copying Archbishop Laud’s prayer. It is most beautiful. I wonder whether he wrote it after Prynne so cruelly took away his manual of prayer from his cell?

“Yours very sincerely,

“A. E. BAYLY,

“‘Edna Lyall’.”

Another letter to the same friend a few days later says :—

“I am so grieved to hear of your illness, and fear that coming out on that stormy afternoon must have done you harm. I have thought a great deal over what you said about prayer. I am sure it does too often get crowded out of my life, and that something more of a system might be helpful. The worst of it is that systems always tend with me to become mechanical, what I think I called ‘hypocritical,’ and that made me fall back much more on the sort of informal prayers that one prays while going about in ordinary life.

“But I know there must be a way of wider inter-



cession which can be combined with perfect sincerity, and, as you say, God understands our hearts. Our tired brains and wandering imagination are perhaps not such dreadful hindrances in His sight. There is a saying of Dr. Arnold's quoted in Bishop Westcott's *Lessons from Work* which struck me, 'Prayer and kindly intercourse with the poor are the two great safeguards of spiritual life'. How good of you to send me Dr. Rendall's sermon. I look forward very much to reading it. I think I met him and his wife the summer before last at Canon Rawnsley's. Is there anything we could do for you and Mrs. T.? To be ill in a hotel always seems to me rather dreary, though people are very kind. Have you all the books you care for? I do so hope you will soon be better," etc., etc.

In December Edna Lyall wrote to Mr. Longman about the publication of the children's book of which she had been thinking in the summer, and says:—

"Some months ago you asked me to let you have the first offer of my next book. I am now writing a children's story, and do not feel sure whether you ever publish such things, but I just mention it in case you care to think of it. It is for children of eight or nine years old, and would want really good illustrations and attractive getting up, as it is quite a quiet book and not a story of thrilling adventures, being in truth a real study of child life five-and-thirty years ago. It would probably be finished by the late spring, and might be published next autumn."

## CHAPTER XII.

PEACE—1902, 1903.

Inspiration—The pantomime—Letter to a godson—*The Hinderers*  
—Cambridge—Proclamation of Peace—Free Trade—*Sydney*  
*Wharnecliffe*—The Lakes again—Belgium—More sorrow—The  
Boer Generals—Ideal Christmas—Last illness.

## CHAPTER XII.

PEACE—1902, 1903.

"Each individual man and woman is called on to be Christ's co-worker in the great fight against evil, the great struggle for righteousness, peace and joy."—*The Hinderers*.

THE new year of 1902, which was to be Edna Lyall's last year on earth and full of much sorrow, began with an inspiration which gave her a great deal of joy. She speaks of it in many letters written from her bed on the 2nd January. One to an intimate friend, who had sent her a book on the future life, says :—

"Do you know you sent me a copy of this book before, so I am returning the new copy. It was very dear of you to think of me. I think the writer has done a good deal in calling attention to the clear teaching in the Bible about 'Paradise'. In some points I don't think he appeals to me, though, so much as Dean Plumptre in his *Spirits in Prison*. That, however, is because now and then he comes down from the spiritual heights into controversial and passing details, and here his 'High Church' views clash with my 'broad do. do.'. In certain regions (heavenly places to my mind) one can sympathise absolutely and meet heart to heart with high, low, broad, Quakers,

Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, but in passing to dogmatic regions the dividing distances become very plain. I said this the other day to Mr. T., a delightful clergyman who sometimes stays in Eastbourne—an extremely High Churchman and a *saint*. He said: ‘Yes, like the trees in a forest; though the trunks are far apart, yet the branches up above meet’. I think it is such a nice parable, and the moral of it seems to me, let each be well rooted in truth and sincerity and develop for their various purposes, not expecting that the trunks will ever be united or precisely uniform, but living for the most part in the meeting upper branches where the air and sunshine can freely come.

“I liked your Christmas letter so much. . . . Forgive a scrawl. I’m writing in bed, but am well-wrapped up and am enjoying a wide open window and a lovely day. Colds have been going through the house, . . . and now I am having a turn, as of course my silly temperature dances up o’ nights and Dr. C. insists. All the same he says I am certainly better than when he last saw me, better pulse, etc., etc. He even allows me to go to [London] for three or four days next week if I am very careful as to avoiding chills. I rather need a little change, but don’t dare take longer or go further afield, and shall do even this little jaunt in a Pullman! I am so happy, for on New Year’s morning an idea for a fresh book came to my mind. It must be nearly as good as a mother’s knowledge that she is to have a child!”

To another friend she says:—

“ I had a new idea for a short story on New Year’s morning, and am much enjoying the process of its development, if only it will develop properly. It started me in very good spirits.”

And again :—

“ I am revelling in my best New Year gift—a thought for a new book. Not a regular novel probably, but something of the ‘slander’ order. Pray that I may be able to work it out.”

Each one of Edna Lyall’s books was “ begun, continued and ended ” with prayer, and it was her custom to use the collect for inspiration from the Communion Service every morning before commencing to write.

In January she was able to spend a few days in London, and had the pleasure of granting the great wish of a small nephew to see Dan Leno in a Drury Lane Pantomime ; of which she writes :—

“ It was great fun taking him, especially as it was *my* first too. Fancy beginning pantomimes at forty-four ! We both thoroughly enjoyed Dan Leno as Sister Anne. . . . The real enjoyment to me was the exquisite beauty of the transformation scenes—especially the last, which was really a dream of lovely colour and perfect motion. And I’m not sure that the chief charm did not lie in the peals of children’s laughter right through that great theatre ! ”

The experience is described in *The Hinderers*—the book which she had begun to think about on New Year’s Day.

The day after her return from town, Edna Lyall

wrote the following beautiful letter to her godson, Mr. and Mrs. Homewood's little boy :—

“6 COLLEGE ROAD, EASTBOURNE,  
“12th *January*, 1902.

“MY DEAR GODSON,

“Though it will not be possible for me to hold you in my arms to-day when I am promising in your name that you will trust in God, and will follow the example of the Prince of Peace, overcoming evil with good and giving up whatever hinders you from living as the son of God should live, I shall be really quite near you.

“Though we can't help longing to see and touch those we love, I fancy one of the lessons we have to learn in this world is that even here and now we can be absolutely close to each other, though physically divided.

“As some one wrote once :—

Thou art with Christ and Christ with me,  
In Christ united still are we.

“To-day your mother is bringing you, as Christ commanded, to be baptised.

“Your baptism is like a coronation and publicly declares that you are God's child ; you were His directly you were born (just as truly as you are your father's and mother's son), but now comes the public ceremony and covenant—just as King Edward, who became King last year, will this year be publicly crowned and will promise to serve his people.

“I write you this letter because it is very possible that before the time comes for your confirmation I may no longer be here, and if that is so your father and mother will give it to you.

“The promises we make for you are so great, and you will find such terrible hindrances and temptations and difficulties as you go through life, that one would be almost afraid were it not quite certain that Christ Himself is to lead you, and that those who try to follow Him and to do right will hear His voice saying to them, ‘Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world’.

“He understands all your temptations and difficulties as no one else can understand them, for He has lived through them all. And don’t think it was easy enough for Him because He was the Eternal Son, for the Bible clearly says that He laid aside all advantage and became truly a man, and that He was *in all points* tempted as we are. However black things look in the future, don’t let the devil cheat you into thinking that violence and dishonesty and wealth and outward shows are the strong and lasting things.

“To-day you are promising to renounce the devil and all his works, his lies and his false standards, and you are promising to do God’s will.

“What God’s will is you will find in the New Testament I send you, and also by giving time to listen to God’s voice speaking to your own conscience.

“The baptismal service sums it up briefly when it says that our profession or ‘calling’ is to follow the

example of our Saviour Christ and to be made like unto Him.

"That is a high ideal, isn't it? But it is the one God intends us all to take.

"May He bless you and keep you.

"Your affectionate godmother,

"ADA ELLEN BAYLY,

"'Edna Lyall'."

Another letter on the subject of baptism may here be fitly introduced. It was written to a Nonconformist lady who had never been baptised, and having consulted Miss Bayly on the question was hesitating as to the next step. The letter begins with regrets that they have not been able to meet again, and goes on to say: "Don't think me meddlesome, but I am so very anxious to know whether you have decided the matter as to Baptism. It is not in the *least*, as you know, that I want you to think as I do, but merely to obey Christ's distinct command, and to join the great Universal Church—that is to say, the body of baptised Christians. Don't you think that the bond of brotherhood is a great help? Quite apart from the question of the special gift of the Holy Spirit about which many different views are held, the mere joining the universal brotherhood is strengthening, and surely a duty not to be put off and delayed from any diffidence as to whether we may not afterwards stumble. Could you not without delay write to —— or —— [a Nonconformist minister and a Church of England clergyman



are named], or any other minister to whom God may lead you, and ask him to see you about it? . . . I do so *long* to know that you will not postpone this very vital matter. If you have any difficulty in writing to either — or — [the ministers mentioned before], I know them both, and would gladly write or see them and break the ice if it would make it any easier. I write very much without ceremony to you, I fear, but you will understand that after the intimate talks we have had I seem to know you in quite a new way, and I hope you will not mind this letter. I know so well how apt one is in a busy life to thrust away a difficulty in the spiritual life and think later on to find a quiet time—which, alas! sometimes comes only after we have made some grievous mistake, or may not come at all. ‘Carpe diem’ is a safe motto for this, surely?”

In January she also wrote to Mr. Green:—

“I am so very sorry to hear that you are laid up. What a long trying illness it is. One comfort in being laid aside for a time is that one does learn to value health as never before, and though it is hard to bear at the time and sometimes seems useless, I am sure it is a very real help to have known what it is to be really ill, and one finds it out afterwards. I think I told you of our sorrow in the death of my dear little niece and goddaughter . . . at the beginning of October. We do miss her most grievously. Yet to-day when coming from the sick-room of a friend of mine who is dying of consumption and suffering very much, I could do nothing but thank God that our

dear little one is safe home with Him, away from all suffering and disease and able to serve Him perfectly. Thank you so much for the very interesting paper on Archbishop Laud. I read many lives of him and came to much the same conclusion as the writer of this paper. It is strange, though, to see how many good men still struggle to gain an impossible uniformity, and never realise how possible and satisfying *unity* would be."

In February some correspondence passed between Edna Lyall and Mr. Maurice on the threatened execution of General Kritzingen which resulted in her getting up and sending a petition to the King. She refers to this in a letter to Mr. Green, which begins with a reference to another great sorrow, in the illness and expected death of an old friend who had always been such a splendid worker and would be grievously missed, and she says :—

"I wonder whether those who leave us only pass on to wider fields of work? What do you think? I hope you are by this time through the weary stage of convalescence, but it takes a long time really to recover from serious illness, does it not? To-day I was reading again the little book you gave me, *The Society of Friends in Faith and Practice*, and feeling so very much in sympathy with many parts of it. Every day seems to show more clearly how much the world needs brave witness-bearing in the cause of peace, and you Friends always combine with it the obedience to Christ's rule of 'judge not,' which some

of the anti-war party in their vehemence are apt to forget perhaps.

“It *is* hard not to boil over with anger sometimes when listening to very aggressive and war-like people. My great interest just now is in the effort to prevent General Kritzingen from sharing the fate of Scheepers and Lotter and Louw, and last week I attempted by private people what the International Peace and Arbitration Society did collectively, namely, a direct appeal to the King. I was so glad they sent the telegram on Saturday, and do hope the attempt may succeed,” etc., etc.

The following letter written to a friend whose son's college expenses she had been bearing, but who had failed in his examination, will show how readily and really she put herself in another's place :—

“I have been wanting to write to you for some days, but somehow the time never came. I hope you are not worrying, dear, over ——'s failure. It is disappointing for him and for you all, but exams are, after all, such a secondary thing—it is everything that he is such a good fellow, and that we know that he will do good work in the world. I suppose he will have to work hard for the next few months, and, of course, I will gladly pay his expenses meantime.”

This spring Edna Lyall was busy writing *The Hinderers*, and she wrote to Miss Bradby, the Secretary of the Boer Women and Children's Clothing Fund, to

ask her if she might dedicate the book to her. When she sent the book she said :—

“ I wish it were better, but we seem as yet too much in the heart of the struggle to be able to attempt more than a slight sketch. The finished picture will have to be undertaken by writers of the next generation.”

Later she wrote to Mrs. Bonner :—

“ I am delighted that you like *The Hinderers*. It has, of course, won me a good many hard blows, so it is cheering to read words like yours. There have been four or five good reviews, but most of them are crushing ; and what with these and the hard times and the general disorganisation of things, the book doesn't go off as quickly as we should like. I was rather amused in the spring when a publisher remarked to me : ‘ I shall be very glad when *the war and the Coronation* are over ’ ! Wasn't it a funny way of looking at things ? I was at Cambridge when the news of peace arrived, and shall never forget the intense relief. I'm glad to say there was no ‘ mafficking ’ there, only a bonfire on Monday with less than the usual rowdiness.”

After her visit to Cambridge she wrote to the nephew who was a student there :—

“ Just a line to thank you once more for the delightful time you gave me at Cambridge. I still walk about those glorious old grounds and take Venetian rows past the Backs in imagination. I am sending you *The Hinderers*, my little peace story, in memory of the good news we heard together on the 1st June.

Lord Kitchener and the soldiers seem doing things in just the right spirit. I only hope the statesmen will be as generous and friendly."

When peace was proclaimed she said to a friend that she "felt as if a great load had been taken off her heart".

During the King's tragic illness, owing to which the Coronation had to be postponed, Edna Lyall wrote to a friend on 28th June:—

"Hasn't this been a strange, sad week? But to-day's news is really better, and I suppose as a nation we badly needed something to sober us and make us own our weakness. Dr. Horton's sermon is the only one I saw reported which struck a really high note; and there was a sensible bit in the *Saturday Review*. How brave and self-forgetful the King has proved himself! Much as one regrets the disappointment for those who have few pleasures, and the loss of money for those who can ill afford to lose it—I've no pity for the gambling speculators in seats—I can't help thinking that the hollowness of mere pageantry and grand ecclesiastical ceremonies has needed a good hard blow, and that our loyalty and thankfulness to God will be better shown by as quiet a coronation as can be arranged later on. After all, it is much on a par with the King's dislike of State addresses from corporations—he delicately reminded them that subscriptions to his Hospital Fund were much more pleasing to him, and of real use! . . . This week I shall be working hard at *The Burges Letters*."

In July Edna Lyall wrote a short article for a new edition of the Eastbourne Liberal paper, and her reference to Free Trade—not at that time so prominently before the country as it is now—is of special interest. Speaking of the need of educating and exercising the mind as well as the body, she goes on to say :—

“ How many people nowadays are thoroughly educated, for instance, as to Free Trade ?

“ A sixpenny edition of Mr. John Morley’s *Life of Cobden* is published by Messrs. Fisher Unwin, and may be ordered of any bookseller. . . . We all grumble at the corn tax, and some of us know how to sing that grand old poem by Ebenezer Elliott, the corn law rhymers, ‘ God Save the People ’. But how far are we helping the rising generation (soon to be voters) to understand how vital the principles of Free Trade are ? How far are we fitting them to withstand the sophistries of the Protectionist ? . . . A hard struggle lies before us in this constituency. Have we counted the cost ? Have we the courage of our convictions ? As Mr. John Morley put it in one of his recent speeches, ‘ Do you know how to swim against the stream ? ’ ”

This month Miss Bayly went again to Caterham and thoroughly enjoyed the country, writing in one letter :—

“ Oh, it is such a *heavenly* day—breathing alone is a pleasure ! ”

This visit was saddened by the sight of her uncle’s

failing health, and as it proved was her last visit to him in the Caterham home. She writes of a Sunday there to a friend :—

“ This morning I went with the others to chapel as I wanted to be with uncle. Such a nice service, including our General Thanksgiving said by every one and a very interesting sermon on ‘ All these things have happened to the furtherance of the Gospel ’ (1st Philippians) ; there was a bit at the end you would have liked. The preacher said he had been trying to think of some beautiful poem or great passage from a well-known writer for the end, but somehow none satisfied him, and he took instead a very simple sentence from the letter of a man quite unknown to any of us and living at the other end of England. He had lost a very favourite brother, and wrote : ‘ I do not feel in the least that it was my brother we laid to rest yesterday—at the funeral—but only some old piece of his furniture which would have been an encumbrance to him in the new work to which he has been called ’.”

On her way up to the Lakes at the end of the month she spent a night in London, where I joined her, and together we went to the public dinner given by friends and sympathisers to Mr. Cartwright, the editor of the *South African News*. She was most interested to meet there, for the first time, Miss Hobhouse, and also enjoyed seeing Miss Bradby and her sisters, and Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Courtney and others.

On her journey to Ambleside, Edna Lyall "made some notes for another book—*Sydney Wharnecliffe*"—which was to be the story of the friend and supposed writer of *Derrick Vaughan*. During her summer holiday she was thinking it out, and wrote to a friend who was travelling on the Continent :—

"Dulcie (the heroine) is brewing. If you come back *via* Dover and Charing Cross, will you study the railway carriages on that line—colour of first-class cushions and what sort of means of summoning the guard?"

She wrote happy letters from Ambleside, full of her usual keen enjoyment of the scenery. Writing of a day spent at Tarn Hows, above Coniston, she says :—

"The colouring was gorgeous; it quite took one's breath away. . . . We sat on the slope of a high hill overlooking this, and I sketched for all I was worth in the hope of stamping the scene permanently in my mind. The air was just what you describe—real mountain air, crisp and cool, but not cold. It makes me want to sing!"

In September she joined the present writer at Ostend, arriving late one evening, very tired after a rough and tedious crossing, but making light of all discomforts and, as ever, glad of new experiences.

Not liking Ostend, we went on next day to Bruges, where was a very fine collection of Dutch pictures, Van Eyck's and Memling's, which we greatly enjoyed. One in particular, of the Nativity, Edna Lyall was immensely struck with and studied for some twenty



minutes, returning to it again and again. At Bruges we drove to see the Béguinage, and in the peaceful shady courtyard of the convent, which she photographed, she talked much of the heroine of her book whom she intended should take refuge there with the Sisters. We then travelled on to Spa, of which she wrote later :—

“ We spent a few quiet days at Spa—such pretty country—and neither the gaming-tables—euphoniously called the ‘ Cercle des Étranges,’ but just as bad as Monaco—nor the races—which, of *course*, were on as I was travelling!—troubled us much, except that it is rather sad to see such evil-looking people about. I found a ‘ Saint-Gal ’—the villain of the story—quite to my fancy. Not too wicked-looking and with plenty of humour. Also a delightful old waiter of about sixty, who will figure in the book as a sort of good angel to Dulcie and her mother. Such a character ! ”

The new book was taking possession of her. She peopled every place with her “ fiction folk,” and many of our experiences were to come into the story, but scarcely five chapters were written before her pen was laid aside for ever.

The main thought of the book was how “ the lives of those who have gone before have still some unknown influence over those connected with them ”. Sydney Wharnecliffe was a descendant of Randolph and Hugo Wharnecliffe of *In the Golden Days*, and his sufferings were part of the inheritance which they had left him. “ It was a terrible thought—that unknown

influence on the lives of unborn generations which we each one of us possess, yet think so little about," are the words used by one of the characters when staying in the ancestral home of the Wharnecliffes, and thinking of the sadness of those far-off days of persecution.

After Edna Lyall's return home, she wrote on the 12th of October :—

"Yesterday [I] began *Sydney Wharnecliffe* with the scene on the quay at Ostend."

She paid many visits to friends this autumn, but just as she was going to Caterham, received sad news of the serious illness of her uncle, and shortly after of his death. She felt this grief deeply, and wrote :—

"How one longs sometimes to 'shuffle off this mortal coil'. But then comes God's gift of three or four hours' sleep and you want to be up and fighting again. . . . Don't for a moment think I want to die—I *don't*—although the body of our humiliation does seem a dreadful clog when you want to be trying to comfort your dear ones and can't do anything but lie and suffer. I am quite physically well now, and every one has been so dear and kind."

Speaking of being able to cry, she says :—

"I'm sure [it] is wholesome and saves people in the long run. I'm always so glad that we are told that our Saviour cried."

Later on in the same letter she writes :—

"It's never too early to keep Christmas, and E., K., and I were planning all kinds of Christmas secrets

last night, and I think our darling J. was very near us."

Writing to one of the cousins at Caterham, she said:—

"I am quite sure we never really know God till we have some great sorrow—and it *is* true indeed, as you say, that the 'strength' comes to us just when it is most sorely needed; so I suppose if only we could keep ourselves from dreading things beforehand, we should always be ready, like Abraham, to leave our future and our dear ones with what old Bishop Hall called '*a faithful carelessness*' in God's hands. Do you find your idea of Heaven get less and less the 'streets of gold' of one's childish notions, and more and more the homes of re-united families that make up the streets?"

Later on in the autumn she came up to town to meet the Boer Generals at a reception, and went to the theatre one night to see "The Best of Friends," and on All Saints' Day joined in the service at Westminster Abbey. She then went to stay at Caterham, saying, "I rather dread going there, but want to be of a little use to them, and it is better to get the first going back over quickly, both for their sakes and mine".

As I was just starting for America she wrote in a farewell letter:—

"I'm glad there'll be no dividing sea 'up above,' as Bernard writes it."

To another friend she wrote:—

“ I have just left Belgium in my story and have to-day reached the point where Sydney Wharnecliffe falls in love with Hope Denham, and mistakenly imagines that she is his ideal bride. I wonder how far it is a genuine thing, this sort of first love. I don't, of course, mean a mere idle fancy passing off in a few days or weeks, but the apparently quite genuine first love which so many men and women have, until later on they meet the really predestined husband or wife ? ”

Speaking in the same letter of a dramatic recital to which she had been, she says of the reciter :—

“ Her Lady Macbeth and Constance were wonderful. I could only keep from sobbing in the last scene with Constance by saying over some of the thirty-nine articles, the driest and least emotional things I know and a sovereign remedy against crying in public ! Try ‘ original sin ’ if you are put to it ! ”

It was a very cold November that year, and Edna Lyall was kept much indoors, but writes with her usual cheerfulness and happy knack of turning difficulties into advantage :—

“ The weather has been Siberian, and they won't let me put my nose out of doors, and if it weren't for running up and down stairs, losing and finding things and tidying up papers, etc., I should be without any exercise.”

She was many days in bed with chills, etc., but always made light of her ill-health, and wrote saying :—

“ Don't worry about me. . . . As you saw by my last I was soon up again, and I only confess to you

now that I was again in bed for three days with a little touch of fever, because I am now up and about again and quite well and because you were promised to hear of all such silly little details!"

This too, she goes on to say, "fitted in well," as a friend was staying in the house with whom she was thus able to have many more quiet talks than if up and busy.

Writing to a friend, for Christmas, who had that year had great sorrow, Edna Lyall said:—

"All best love and best wishes for Christmas. . . . You know . . . how specially you will be in my thoughts this year. I know so well how hard it will be for you—but one is helped through these sad times—and there is always the comfort of trying to make it a specially happy Christmas for other people. . . ."

In a letter to me she refers again to the progress of her story, thus:—

"As to the book—I think it is frozen, for it moves with the greatest difficulty!"

And again, speaking of my return, says:—

"You will find very little book written—I have been too stupid. Snow seems to crush all that side of me and writing becomes a dreadful labour instead of a joy, so I don't force it, as there is fortunately no need for pot-boilers. . . . No one can guess what it is to have to write with a sore heart, and I feel like saying 'never again!' to any work which must be promised by a certain date. The education muddle is awful—and is doing the Church of England great harm. Do

find out what the effect of no State Church is in America. Has the Episcopal Church become much priest-ridden? and are all persuasions really quite on an equality? Things look a little less bad as to Venezuela this morning. I do hope nothing very serious will come of it. . . .”

On Christmas day she wrote again :—

“We had such a busy Christmas Eve. I got most of my parcels off the day before or even earlier. . . . Yesterday E. and I drove up to Hurst Road and gave the toys to the Union children there, and then on to the House itself. . . . Both master and matron seemed very pleasant. Then at 1.30 I went to Holy Trinity to old Major Giberne’s funeral. It is so sad for the poor daughters just at Christmas.”

Writing to Mr. Homewood the same day she says :—

“I am very tired, for Christmas is always such a busy time. In the midst of it an editor writes to beg for my description of an ‘Ideal Christmas’! I felt inclined to write a one-line essay—‘My Ideal Christmas. *No business letters.* Finis.’”

What she did write was as follows :—

“Preparations should begin in November; presents be chosen before the shops are intolerably crowded, and sent off by 22nd or 23rd December. Then you can taste the enjoyment of sending them, and the unlucky Post Office officials are not so overburdened. The ideal Christmas Eve should be crammed with

fetching and carrying and Christmas-tree dressing, and the visiting of lonely folk. Christmas day should be the great home festival and family gathering, and, to make it complete, one would like a good hearty service with old-fashioned music and carols, in which all can join, in a church which has the beauty of simplicity without anything ornate or ritualistic.

“Above all, Christmas, to be ideal, demands children in the house. If you haven’t them of your own, you must borrow them! Then, when the indispensable turkey, plum-pudding, and mince-pie have been eaten, and the Christmas games played by all, take down your Charles Dickens from the book-shelf and browse quietly by your fireside.

“EDNA LYALL.”

New Year’s Day, 1903, was bright and lovely, and Edna Lyall expressed herself as feeling delightfully well. A letter bearing that date was written by her to the secretary of the Eastbourne Women’s Liberal Association, of which she was at that time one of the vice-presidents. It was thought that the then president might be retiring, and Edna Lyall was asked if she would fill that post. She replied that, if wished, she would gladly accept the honour should it be thought good for the Liberal cause, and goes on to say :—

“I care for nothing else. . . . It is no doubt very important that *all* genuine Liberals should work together and as far as possible ignore little differences,

but it is surely necessary that we should be loyal to official Liberalism, and not after newly-devised and fashionable 'Leagues'. If, as an association, we are true to the great Liberal principles of peace, retrenchment, reform, and resistance to reaction, I would gladly become president should you indeed wish it."

She wrote to Queenstown early in the month in excellent spirits to welcome me home from America, but the next letter said :—

"I hope you had my note at Queenstown. I didn't tell you in that that we had mild 'flu,' but I was up again yesterday and hope to be downstairs this afternoon, and it is only winding up in a heavy cold which will, I trust, be well in a few days."

She recovered from this sufficiently to be able to go out again, and on 17th January she went in a bath-chair for her annual expedition with "Emma," the nurse, to the theatre. But that night her temperature went up very high, and she went to bed never to come down again. At first she had continuous high fever, and when that abated neuralgia set in, so that she became very weak, and wrote in a little pencil-note that I must expect to find her "very spachless, for, like the Queen of Sheba, there was no spirit left" in her after the awful pain and fever, but that she was getting on, though the doctor said it would be a long business.

On the 28th of January it was decided that an operation on the ear was imperative. She took the news



with her usual heroic self-control, only saying : " You have heard of the operation ? Isn't it horrid ? " and then resolutely turned to other subjects and other people's interests. Two nurses came to help and at first all went most satisfactorily ; she bore the operation well and every symptom was favourable, but her brave fight was over and extreme weakness set in, and in a week the doctors said that there would be no rally. She had no more pain, though, of course, one knew that such weakness was suffering of a kind, and one day she said pathetically that she did not know it was possible to feel so tired. But she bore all without a murmur with her long-tried patience, constantly thinking of others, and asking if her nurses had slept and had their meals, etc. At the last she became completely unconscious, and after about twenty-four hours of this, on Sunday evening, 8th February, quietly slept away to " awake in His likeness and be satisfied ". There was no " sadness of farewells " for her, and she died as she had lived, in quietness and in confidence. It was found that she had arranged all the details of the funeral to save her family as much as was possible, requesting that there should be no flowers and that no one would go into mourning unless very particularly wished, and then very slightly. She had selected the hymns for the service : " Jesus Lives " and her old favourite, Baxter's " Lord, it belongs not to my care whether I die or live " ; and in her will she desired that her body should be cremated and the ashes be placed at the

foot of the old Cross in Bosbury Churchyard, and should her friends wish to raise another stone in her memory, on it should be placed the words: "My trust is in the tender mercy of God for ever and ever".



#### APPRECIATIONS.

The Bishop of Hereford—The Bishop of Ripon—The Archdeacon of Westminster—Canon Rawnsley—Mr. Justin M'Carthy—Mr. William O'Brien.

APPRECIATIONS SENT TO THE REV. R.  
BURGES BAYLY.

THE BISHOP OF HEREFORD.

“THE PALACE, HEREFORD,  
“30th August, 1904.

“IN one of her latest books Edna Lyall gave her readers some of the fruits of her connection with Herefordshire, so that it may not be inappropriate that a word or two should appear in the record of her life setting forth the impression she made on those who knew her in this county ; and my belief is that in what I am writing I am expressing, however inadequately, the general feeling.

“I make no attempt to define her place and power as a writer, though I hope that such a book as *We Two*, with its finely drawn characters, especially its pure and beautiful type of womanhood exhibited in Erica, and its rare liberality of sentiment, may hold an honoured place among the novels of the nineteenth century for many generations to come, and continue to exercise its influence on many young lives.

“What specially struck us in regard to Miss Bayly was the rare combination of tenderness, sympathy,

strength, and magnanimity in her own personal character.

“ I have seldom seen a sincere and devout Churchwoman so absolutely free from the least tinge of illiberal sentiment towards any other denomination or creed, so perfect an example of the charitable temper.

“ Having apparently no thoughts of self except as called to live the life of duty and sympathy, she was quite fearless in her advocacy of what she held to be right, as only the entirely unselfish can be fearless ; and I can recall no one who both spoke and wrote with more unswerving consistency in favour of justice, mercy, magnanimity, whether in private or public affairs.

“ As a witness to this I might refer to her attitude and all her noble utterances on the disastrous policy that dragged our country into the Boer War, or on the horrors which the great Christian powers, to their everlasting discredit, allowed the Turks to perpetrate with impunity on the population of Armenia.

“ She could not have been unconscious of her rare mental gifts, and yet she was the very impersonation of a retiring modesty, untouched by vanity or self-importance.

“ The influence of such a woman, breathing the spirit of her own personality into the characters she created, is to the young a gift of great price, teaching and inspiring them, as it does, to maintain and uplift in their generation the higher and purer standards of life, culture, and conduct.

"As I think of her I am tempted to say that the words of an eloquent writer on Margaret Charlton, the wife of Richard Baxter, might be used of Edna Lyall with more appropriateness than of almost any other woman I have known among my contemporaries: 'Timid, gentle and reserved, her heart was the abode of affection so intense, and of fortitude so enduring, that her meek spirit, impatient of one selfish wish, progressively acquired all the heroism of benevolence.'

"Equally noticeable are her catholic charity to those of other religious opinions, and her devout and faithful adherence to her own ; her high esteem of the active and passive virtues of the Christian life, as contrasted with a barren orthodoxy, and her noble and fearless disinterestedness.'

"I know of no better wish for the welfare of any young girl than that she might grow up and go through her life cherishing the spirit, nursing the aims, and following the ideals of Edna Lyall.

"J. HEREFORD."

#### THE BISHOP OF RIPON.

"WHEN Edna Lyall died there were many who felt that they had lost a friend ; they may have never met her, but in her writings they had found one who could interpret much of their life and many of their thoughts to themselves. Those who help us to understand ourselves are true helpers, and it was, I think, the quick recognition of this faculty in Edna Lyall which occa-

sioned the warm welcome given to *Donovan* and *We Two*. Her teaching was wholesome and strong; the sense of the dignity of life was clear, and the duty of taking it honestly and seriously was nobly enforced. I know that many were invigorated and consoled by the experiences which the reading of these books provoked. In whatever she wrote there was the tone of high and noble purpose, and she succeeded, I think, in drawing her readers into sympathy with her aspirations."

THE ARCHDEACON OF WESTMINSTER.

"20 DEANS YARD, WESTMINSTER ABBEY,  
"4th April, 1904.

"DEAR MR. BAYLY,

"I rejoice to know that a memoir of your gifted sister is in preparation. Her teaching has tended to lift the standard of the human race by unfolding the true relationship between God and man. Many anxious hearts who were losing their way in the tangle of inadequate conception of the Divine Being have been helped and strengthened by her writings. If the conviction of the Eternal Fatherhood as manifested in the Incarnation, which formed the bed-rock of her teaching, were incorporated into the verities of human life the world would need no other theology.

"I am, faithfully yours,

"BASIL WILBERFORCE,

"*Archdeacon of Westminster.*"



CANON RAWNSLEY.

"A REMINISCENCE.

"IT was always a great pleasure to welcome Edna Lyall back to the country she loved so well, and many are the pleasant talks we have had together in the vicarage garden with the white lake shining through the lime trees and the blue hills of Borrowdale in the distance, on which one so constantly saw her gazing during the pauses of conversation.

"What struck one about her always was her diffidence. Stirred to the depths by any cruelty or wrong, as in the case of the Armenian massacres, she seemed to feel she could not trust herself to talk about such things and must only write of them, and one would have supposed she had less strength of character than she really possessed, but as soon as her shyness passed away and her interest in a subject overcame all self-consciousness she spoke with fire and firmness, and one realised that she was a woman of courage and conviction.

"I remember on one occasion when Edna Lyall met Mrs. Lynn Linton, how during the first part of luncheon she seemed almost paralysed by the presence of the elder authoress, but the subject that was broached deeply interested her, and the two were soon in deep discussion, which resulted in Mrs. Lynn Linton saying afterwards 'What a sincere soul she has!'

"It was, I think, her transparent sincerity that attracted people to her, and her deep humility added a great charm to her character.

"She never talked much about religion, but you could not be with her for an hour and not feel her spiritual personality and her catholic-mindedness. She seemed to me to care a good deal for scenery and for colour, and, without being particularly well read in the poets, to drink in poetry and to understand the essence of it. She always responded to any passage of the poets that was read *apropos* of the talk.

"Each summer she was in the Lake country she made a point of attending service in Crosthwaite Church. She said the simplicity and heartiness of the service attracted her, and I should say simplicity and heart were the gospel of her life.

"The world she lived in was the ideal one; she looked for the time when each man's good would be the good of all, and nothing gave her much more pleasure than the being able to subscribe very handsomely to the purchase of Brandelhow on the shores of Derwentwater, for she looked to the time when the humblest classes would be educated to love of Nature and a sense of natural beauty, and she delighted to think that others could share her joy in these things.

"She much appreciated such pictures as dealt with Nature, and I shall not soon forget her enthusiasm as she stood before a fine representation of a sunset light on the Jungfrau and the Gorge of Lauterbrunnen as seen from the Schynige Platte, nor the interest she took in our little exhibition of our friend Harry Goodwin's pictures.

"She used to speak of her literary work very much as if she felt it were a mission, and seeing how far from strong in health she was it was a wonder to me that she accomplished so much.

"It was a shock to us all to know that her quiet personality

had without a strife  
Slipped in a moment out of life,

and the summer at the English Lakes has never been quite the same since her sympathetic and tender-souled presence has been denied us.

"She loved our Cumberland hills with a steady passion. It was 'among the mountains' that she felt 'the weight of her desires,' and without her Borrowdale has lost a voice.

"H. D. RAWNSLEY."

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY.

"I HAVE always felt the most sincere admiration for the works of Edna Lyall regarded merely as literary productions, but I ever saw in them something deeper and more touching than any mere skill in literary productiveness can give to an author's writings. I had the honour to know Edna Lyall, and I admired to the full the noble, generous, and, I may even say, sacred purpose which inspired her in her literary career. She always wrote with an absorbing desire to serve, to enlighten, and to elevate our poor human nature in its everyday crosses and trials and troubles, and yet she brought to her work none the less the true spirit

of an artist who understands how to make literary work attractive as well as instructive. It was indeed a privilege to have known her, and that I once enjoyed that privilege shall ever be remembered with thankfulness by me. I thank you from my heart for having given me this opportunity of paying my poor tribute to her intellect and her heart, and to that literary career which closed all too soon, but was yet able to win for itself an enduring memory.

“JUSTIN M‘CARTHY.”

MR. WILLIAM O‘BRIEN.

“MALLOW COTTAGE, WESTPORT,

“11th August, 1904.

“WE once had the privilege of welcoming Miss ‘Edna Lyall’ to our little country home here, and her memory has remained with us ever since as sweet as the breath of a morning rose. Her books were the image of herself—gentle, deep, and true. While she understood and shared in the sorrows of our worldly lot, she had also a true woman’s appreciation of the goodness of human nature and the consolations of human affection. She was one of those English women who might have done more than laws or armies to gain the good-will of the Irish nation.

“WILLIAM O‘BRIEN.”

## EPILOGUE.

IT seems to me, as indeed must be the case with every biographer, as if the title of this book should be "Some of the Letters and *Part of the Life* of Edna Lyall"—so much is perforce left unsaid, so inadequate is that which is written, to give any true idea of the real person, the modest, humble, retiring but strong spirit, and the devoted, consecrated life; but all her friends and many others will, one trusts, be able to read between the lines, and will understand that the greater part of the letters were too private to be quoted, and contained much which only concerned those to whom they were written, for Edna Lyall wrote as she talked to her friends, much more of their affairs than of her own.

It is, indeed, as one of her favourite poets (Whittier) says—

The gospel of a life like hers  
Is more than books or scrolls.

There are many who may like to know that one of her numerous charities is still being continued in her name. Throughout the year it was Edna Lyall's custom to pay the entire expenses of two visitors, in succession, to Eastbourne from Bethnal Green. Her Sunday class and several friends now subscribe, when her birthday comes round, large sums and small to perpetuate this very useful way of helping Londoners,

and it is intended that a large proportion of the profits of this book shall be appropriated to this purpose. No subscription lists are published, but all sums are acknowledged at once, and a statement of money received and spent is sent out annually. Any contributions may be sent to the Treasurer—

MISS ESCREET,

10 GROVE ROAD,

EASTBOURNE.

To the friends who have so generously lent letters for this volume my warmest thanks are due, and to those who have kindly written reminiscences and appreciations, all who read them will also be most grateful.

I have also to thank Messrs. Longmans, Green, & Co., Messrs. Hurst & Blackett, Messrs. Methuen & Co., Messrs. James Clarke & Co., for permission to take extracts from the works of Edna Lyall published by them; Mr. Gordon Home, who kindly allows me to quote from the preface to his booklet on Farnham published by the Homeland Association; the Editor of *Good Words* for the quotation from the article "How I Became a Novelist," etc., published in that magazine; the Editor of *The Lady's Realm*, in which magazine "The Critic" was published; and the Editor of *Pearson's Magazine*, who published in the Christmas number, 1903, Edna Lyall's "Ideal Christmas".

And here "cometh the end . . . not a cessation of life but fuller life" for Edna Lyall and all who love her.

THE END.

THE ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY PRESS LIMITED





134219 023D

OCT 3 1966

REC'D L

MAR 10 7:24 AM '66

310150

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

